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SOCIAL
ETIQUETTE
OF NEW YORK

"Custom forms us all :
Our thoughts, our morals, our most fixed beliefs,
Are consequences of our place of birth."

AARON HILL.

"Man yields to custom, as he bows to fate ;
In all things ruled—mind, body, and estate."

GEORGE CRABBE.

"There are not unfrequently substantial reasons underneath for customs that appear to be absurd."

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

REWRITTEN AND ENLARGED



NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1892

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SOCIAL ETIQUETTE OF NEW YORK.

INTRODUCTION.

IN response to numerous and constant applications from all parts of the country for information regarding social forms and usages in New York, the author has prepared a series of articles, in which special pains have been taken to make them represent faithfully and accurately existing customs in New York society, in distinction from the many manuals on the subject that have simply reproduced the codes of Paris and London. These foreign exemplars may have sufficed for all practical purposes years ago, when both town and country were in a more rudimental stage of development; but they are now clearly useless, when society has acquired a certain definite character, and New York is a law unto itself in

the same way, if not in the same degree, as the great capitals of Europe. There is still a considerable variation of usage in circles ranking themselves as "our best society," and no person not thoroughly conversant with the gradations could draw the line between the living law, which is to remain and grow with the city's growth, and the obsolete traditions, which only linger through their own inertia and the incapacity of their devotees to adapt themselves to the larger present conditions of social development. The author of this manual has not attempted to modify or to improve upon existing forms, or to question either the taste or the propriety of our fixed usages, but to furnish a report or a description of our customs as taught and practiced by the superior families of New York city.

I.

THE VALUE OF ETIQUETTE.

To enter a social circle without being familiar with its customs and its best usages is like attempting to dance a quadrille without knowing its forms. It is claimed that kindness of heart and gentleness of manners will make rudeness impossible. This is very true, but the finest and the sweetest of impulses, combined, fail to produce graceful habits or prevent painful awkwardness. An intimate acquaintance with the refined customs and highest tones of society insures harmony in its conduct, while ignorance of them inevitably produces discords and confusion. Fortunate are those who were born in an atmosphere of intelligent refinement, because mistakes to them are almost impossible. They know no other way than the right one in the management of their social affairs.

As to the unfortunates who have been reared at remote distances from the centers of civilization, there is nothing left for them to do but to make a careful study of unquestionable authority in those matters of etiquette which prevail among the most refined people. High breeding may be imitated, and a gentle courtesy of manner may be acquired through the same processes by which other accomplishment is perfected. Even a disagreeable duty may be so beautified by graciousness that it will appear almost as if it were a compliment. Elegant manners should not be considered beneath the attention of any man or any woman. They will carry a stranger farther up the heights of social ambition than money, mental culture, or personal beauty. Combine elegance of manner with thoughtfulness and any other of the three powers, and the world is vanquished.

Etiquette is the machinery of society. It polishes and protects even while conducting its charge. It prevents the agony of uncertainty, and soothes even when it can not cure the pains of blushing bashfulness. If one is certain of

being correct, there is little to be anxious about. Etiquette may be despotic, but its cruelty is inspired by intelligent kindness. It is like a wall built up around us to protect us from disagreeable, under-bred people, who refuse to take the trouble to be civil. Those who defy the rules of the best society, and claim to be superior to them, are always coarse in their moral fiber, however strong they may be intellectually.

Different civilized nations have provided for themselves sets of rules which have been established slowly, carefully, and firmly, to suit their peculiar sentiments and requirements. These codes serve as a music that is felt, when not heard, and communities walk by it in beautiful harmony and ease. Etiquette once having become a fixed habit, ceases to be that dreadful thing which the too free American abhors. It is a steadfast friend, a sure guide, and an armor against which malicious arrows may fly without leaving a mark. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that etiquette must of necessity be a cold formality. The warmth or chill of one's conduct is regulated by private sentiment,

and a kindness is always all the more beautiful if it is gracefully and appropriately extended.

Possibly those vagrants who scorn etiquette, and refuse to take the white high-road of a refined civilization, do not possess those necessary aptitudes for imitation which are requisite for the easy acquirement of customs and formalities which by birth are alien to them. Sneering is not infrequently a thin and foolish veil by which they endeavor to hide their lack of birth and breeding. If such undisciplined persons would only submit to custom, and use their best powers of adaptation, they would soon discover that formality is as easy as a tune that sings itself in one's thought without a sound being heard.

The slight and agreeable variations which are often made in the forms and usages of well-bred people in their intercourse with the world may be compared to the different parts of that same melody. Courtesy is inherited only by Nature's favorites, and *brusquerie*, through the "irony of fate," is often the unfortunate natural expression of tenderest souls ; but inheritances may be escaped by the will, just as a club-foot may be

made straight if taken in season and persistently righted. A courteous person, with a natural misfortune of form or features, may become the most delightful of society's favorites, if winning charms of manner are acquired and practiced. Etiquette can no more justly be called coldness, than vulgar, loud and gushing warmth can be considered attractive or elegant.

Individual tendencies guide us in the conduct of our lives, but they are not trustworthy instructors in the prevailing and most acceptable etiquette for arranging our relations with our friends and acquaintances, or of entertaining our guests.

From the unsettled state of sentiment and opinion which prevailed among us a few years ago, fortunately we are mostly emancipated. We may, and doubtless did, appear "grotesquely raw," as our English critic declared, and *très drôle*, according to the better-bred Parisian visitor, and very likely neither of these sharers of our too abundant hospitalities will approve of our present style of conducting our social affairs whenever and wherever these points shall differ

from their own established formalities ; but that matters nothing to us. We possess an undeniable right to ordain a social code of our own, and we confess frankly and thankfully that we have imitated whatever we have considered wisest and pleasantest in the habits of French, English, and other nations. As the formality of social matters in France is less heavy and more graceful than it is in England, New York, which is admitted to be the metropolitan city of America, has discreetly chosen its customs largely from the former, modifying and adapting them to accord with our national conditions.

Everything which refines the habits of a people ennobles it, and hence the importance of furnishing to the public all possible aids to superior manners.

Even frugality itself has its beautiful methods of being elegant and hospitable, and no one need be less attractive in his courtesies because he happens not to be rich. Delicate attentions and the charms of a superior manner will compel a simple entertainment to seem like a royal banquet, and lend to a modest house a smile of fas-

cinating beauty. The charm of this achievement lies in the art of receiving and entertaining; and a cordial courtesy which is not oppressive, but which sits lightly upon both giver and receiver, is the perfection of hospitality. The costliest banquetings are unacceptable to the highly-bred gentleman or lady if their appointments be wanting in good taste, and their conduct be awkward.

Awkwardness is the twin-brother of embarrassment, and they are never separated.

A delicate, prompt, and appropriate courtesy is superior to an untimely honor. None but the thoughtless or the vulgar (and to be thoughtless *is* to be vulgar, some wise man insists,) indulge in excesses of any kind. The numbers of the invited guests, and the quantity and quality of their feastings, are subjects for nice consideration, and the condition of the public mind and also the public purse will go far toward measuring out the grade of a banquet, and controlling the quality of an entertainment. Courteous hosts will never violate a public sentiment in their pleasures. It is quite enough of moral combat

to trample down prejudice and wrong. If the community be sorrowful or depressed, no well-bred individual will make a parade of rejoicing. If financial anxieties weary and worry the masses, fortunate individuals, with delicate sentiments or refined feelings, express no social rejoicings. No feasts and no festivities will be given in the presence of neighboring poverty or distress.

This influencing sentiment of common sympathy was born and nourished by republicanism. Free as we are in all our opinions, and also in the expression of them, a common brotherhood clasps our hearts closely, and a common formula of courtesies, which is known as our own social etiquette, should be the thoroughly understood method of communicating our regard for each other. While this etiquette becomes gentle speech for kindly people, it also serves as a guard and preserver of our household sanctities.

II.

INTRODUCTIONS.

LADIES of social equality are introduced to each other, and so also are gentlemen. The latter, however, are always presented to ladies. The distinction in the form is an agreeable and proper homage to womankind, which a true gentleman is glad to pay to her.

The forms of introductions and presentations must necessarily differ in a country where an equality of citizenship is established by constitutional law. The endeavor to fix social formalities by a judicial power becomes a comical absurdity when attempted in New York; therefore intellectual development, refined culture, and gentleness of breeding, combine to arrange our forms of presentation and introduction in such flexible ways as shall satisfy all grades of society.

It is probable that from the foreign custom of announcing guests from the thresholds of *salons*

by a loud-voiced servant is acquired our habit of mentioning the name of the less important or the younger person first. To make this distinction appear less emphatic, when the difference between the parties introduced is a debatable one, it has become the formal custom among many to say, "Mrs. A., this is Mrs. H. ; Mrs. H., Mrs. A." A balance of respect is thus struck, or very nearly so, by this arrangement.

If a gentleman is presented to a lady by a gentleman, of course permission is first secured from the lady, and afterward the presentation is made complimentary by its formula : "Mr. Mortimer desires to be presented to Mrs. or Miss Fairfax."

Or if the lady or gentleman making the presentation desires the unknown parties to become acquainted for his or her own personal reasons, he or she says : "This is Mr. Mortimer, Mrs. Fairfax. It gives me pleasure to present him to you." The married lady replies according to her inclination, of course regulating the expression of her sentiments by courtesy and good-breeding. If she be glad to know Mr. Morti-

mer, she says so with frankness and cordiality ; and she briefly thanks the presenting party as soon as she has accepted the new acquaintance, and then the presenter retires. The young lady can only express a polite recognition of the gentleman presented, by bowing, smiling, and mentioning the name of the new acquaintance as a response. The expressed gratification is all made by the gentleman, and he will never fail to say some complimentary thing to her in regard to the ceremony. Two ladies may extend hands to each other, and so also may two gentlemen, although hand-shaking is not so common as formerly. The introduced parties may be as friendly as they please to each other, although excessive cordiality is not considered a part of high-breeding at the first meeting of people in general society, because the estimate in which strangers hold each other usually rests upon a flimsy or a fictitious basis. Hearty good fellowship demands something more than an eulogium of the features of those whom we meet.

If the difference in age between two ladies or two gentlemen be unmistakably perceptible,

the younger is introduced to the elder. If a publicly-admitted superiority exists, age, unless very advanced, is unconsidered in this formality. The unknown to fame is presented to the famous.

The single lady is introduced to the married lady, and the single gentleman to the married, other things being equal.

Those persons who have been born and reared in the best society never make a hasty presentation or introduction. An habitual though momentary reflection adjusts in their own minds the proper relation of the two who are about to be made known to each other, and unpleasant mistakes thus become almost impossible.

In another chapter sufficient is written in regard to that easy elegance of manner which every person should acquire and maintain at a private party, or in the reception-room of one who has been a hostess. Introductions are considered wholly unnecessary to a pleasant conversation. Every person may feel that he is, at least for the time being, upon a social equality

with every guest who is present. That a person was bidden to the entertainment proves that the host so considers him, and the acceptance of the invitation levels him, for the time being, either up or down to the social grade of all whom he may meet, no matter at what estimate he may hold himself when elsewhere. The fact that they are guests of the same hostess places them upon a social equality that each is compelled to admit temporarily at least. It is a "roof introduction," as it is aptly styled in France, therefore, a lady or gentleman must conduct himself or herself, while remaining in the house, as if there were a no more exclusive or exalted society in all the world than that which is present. To converse above the comprehension of a temporary companion is an unpardonable egotism, and to convey to a fellow-guest the impression that surroundings superior to the present are the only ones with which the speaker is familiar is incontrovertible testimony to the contrary. If polished people were his only customary society, unpleasant comparisons would be impossible to his tongue. Genuine

excellence is never compelled to assert or explain itself, if it happens to be thrown among a people with less polished formalities of manner, or a less elegant conduct of social matters. A nobility of sentiment compels its possessors to be agreeable to simpler folk whom they meet, and an introduction to an inferior in breeding and position will never be met with other than a kindly greeting. It is for the gently bred to show by example the attractions of a higher standard of conduct. Superiority of character is never outwardly disturbed by contact with lesser excellence. It is self-centred, and holds itself in readiness to compel others to be content with its presence. There should be no wounded vanity stirring in the heart of the one who is presented, nor an inflated pride in the mind of the person who receives a new acquaintance. The accepted formalities for making presentations should be familiar to every host and hostess, but it must not be forgotten that miscellaneous introductions have fallen into disuse. Indeed, they are seldom made except by request, or as a social necessity at dinners, dances,

etc. A superior breeding makes conversation as easy and entertaining between strangers, who meet at the house of a friend, as if their names had been pronounced.

III.

SALUTATIONS.

IF bowing to a lady expressed deference, then might any gentleman incline his head to every woman he met; but it does not. It means recognition and nothing else, and it is her prerogative to acknowledge this, and the gentleman's to bestow it with an easy and deferential grace. Under no circumstances have merely formal acquaintances, who are equals in age and position, a right to change this formality. Between intimate friends, it is immaterial which bows first, the gentleman or lady. The lady may be distant or cordial in her salutation, and the gentleman must be respectfully responsive to her manner, and claim no more attention than she offers to him. A carefully-bred lady will never be capricious in her public recognitions of gentlemen, nor will she be demonstrative. Self-respect withholds her from expressing any pri-

vate sentiments of dislike in her public greetings, although she may refuse to recognize an acquaintance for good and sufficient reasons. Her recognitions will be fully polite, or they will not be made at all. She will not insult any one by a frigid recognition, which may be observed by strangers. Under all circumstances, upon the promenade, the street, or in other public places, her smiles are faint and her bows are reserved, but they are not discourteous, and no gentleman possesses the right to criticise this dignified demeanor, no matter how cordially she may have received him at a recent ball, or when he last paid his respects to her at her home.

A faint smile and a formal bow are all that the most refined lady accords to the visitor of her family when she passes him in her walks or drives. If a gentleman lifts his hat and stops after she has recognized him, he may beg permission to turn and accompany her for a little way, or even a long distance. Under no circumstances will he stand still in the street to converse with her, or be offended if she excuses

herself and passes on. She may be in haste, or otherwise absorbed, and his conversation may be an interruption to her thought, even though she be at other times graciously pleased to entertain him with her social accomplishments. Neither may he ask this favor of her unless he be an admitted friend and visitor of her family.

A lady may remember and recognize a gentleman who has been formally presented to her, even when he can not recall her face, so much change does evening toilet and gaslight often create in a lady's appearance. His acknowledgment of her recognition must be as respectfully courteous to an apparent stranger as it would be to a valued friend. The passers in the street know no difference in individuals. A gentleman is compelled to suppose that an apparent lady is a lady, but a lady may use her own knowledge in public places, and, if justified unmistakably, she may be oblivious of those whom she does not any longer include within her circle of friends.

The same formalities must be observed at entertainments. The gentleman who is a formal

acquaintance waits patiently for the lady-guest to recognize his presence. Of course at a private party no lady will be purposely uncivil to any fellow-guest. It would be a discourtesy to an entertainer. Neither will she show sufficient gratification at meeting a gentleman, that the most self-admiring of that sex, to whom vanity is not traditionally imputed, shall be enabled to imagine that she craves his attention.

When entering a parlor to pay a brief visit, a gentleman should always carry his hat, leaving his overshoes, overcoat, and umbrella in the hall if it be winter time. The lady rises to receive him, unless she is an invalid, or advanced in years, in which case she receives him seated, and excuses herself from rising. If she extends her hand to him, he takes it respectfully; but he does not remove his glove, as was the old style. He never offers his hand first. He can not do this any more than the formal acquaintance can bow first. If it be a hasty call, and others are present, he seldom seats himself, and takes leave very soon after another gentleman enters, even though his stay has been very brief. The lady

still retains her seat and bows her *adieux*, without extending her hand a second time, even if she offered it upon his entrance. Hand-shaking is very properly falling into disuse in ordinary visits.

A lady never accompanies a gentleman to the door of the drawing-room, much less to the vestibule, unless she desires him to understand that she entertains a profoundly respectful regard for him. She introduces him to no one, unless there be some especial reason why this formality should take place ; but he converses with her other guests just as if he had met them before. No after recognition is warranted between gentlemen, or between ladies, and certainly not between a lady and gentleman, until they shall meet again in the drawing-room, when the gift of mutual speech is resumed. This custom may have its unpleasant aspects, but it is one of the safeguards of society. If the parties desire to be presented to each other, the opportunity is afforded them at these casual meetings. The hostess can not easily refuse this formality if she be asked to perform it ; and, if the acquaintance

be mutually agreeable, it is well ; but, if not, the lady can terminate it speedily between herself and a gentleman. It may not end thus abruptly between ladies, or between gentlemen, and an easy after-nod of recognition costs nothing, and it may afford pleasure to another. Certainly there must be some positive cause for dislike that can prevent a well-bred person from bowing to one who has been admitted to the house of a mutual acquaintance, and properly introduced. Kindliness, considerateness, and all gracious courtesies belong together, and the gently bred are not likely to forget to express these charming virtues.

There may be circumstances when a gentleman may lift his hat to a passing lady, even though he can not bow to her. She may be offended with him, and yet he may respect and feel kindly toward her. He may deserve her disregard, and it is permitted him to express his continued reverence by uncovering his head in her presence ; but he has no right to look at her as she passes him. He must drop his eyes.

He lifts his hat to a lady whom he passes

in a hall or corridor, unless the place be a thoroughfare, but he does not rest his glance upon her. This is an expression of respect and courtesy to the sex.

It not infrequently happens when gentlemen are driving, that they can not touch their hats because too closely occupied; but a cordial bow satisfies the most exacting of ladies under such circumstances. When riding in the saddle he may lift his hat, or touch its rim with his whip, according to convenience. Etiquette permits both styles of greeting.

In passing a group of mourners at a doorway, where their dead is being carried forth, or a funeral *cortège* in a quiet street, a gentleman will uncover his head. This is a beautiful French custom, and it is now so fully incorporated with our own habits that it may well be styled a part of our street etiquette. It is certainly an appropriate recognition of a sorrow that some time or other falls to the lot of all of us.

A gentleman always lifts his hat when offering a service to a lady, whether he is acquainted

with her or not. It may be the restoration of her dropped kerchief, or fan, the receiving of her money to pass it to the cash-box of a car, the opening of her umbrella as she descends from a carriage—all the same ; he lifts it before he offers his service, or during the courtesy, if possible. She bows, and, if she choose, she also smiles her acknowledgment ; but she does the latter faintly, and she does not speak. To say “Thank you !” is not an excess of acknowledgment, but it has ceased to be etiquette. A bow may convey more gratitude than speech.

This etiquette has been criticised as an inadequate acknowledgment of an attention, but, if those who are able to arrange a kindlier formula would but remember that it is quite as gracious to receive as it is to bestow benefits, perhaps they would be satisfied with the present usage.

When a gentleman accompanies a lady upon whom such an attention is bestowed, he always lifts his hat and says “Thank you.” If it is the giving up of a seat to the lady, he will not seat himself while the obliging stranger is still stand-

ing, but call his attention to the first vacant place, should he be unobservant of it, and thus again acknowledge his appreciation of a civility shown to the lady.

A gentleman opens a door for a strange lady, holds it open with one hand and lifts his hat with the other, while she passes through in advance of him. He always offers her the precedence; but he does it silently, and without resting his gaze upon her, as if he would say, "You are a lady and I am a gentleman. I am polite for both our sakes. You may be young and charming, or you may be old and ugly; it is all the same to me. I have not looked at you to discern, but I am certain that you are a lady."

A gentleman who is walking in the street with a lady touches his hat, and bows to whomsoever she salutes in passing. This is done in compliment to her acquaintance, who is most likely a stranger to him. If accompanying her across a drawing-room, and she bows to a friend, he inclines his head also; but he does not speak.

He always raises his hat when he begs a

lady's pardon for an inadvertence, whether he is known to her or not.

Ladies who entertain hospitably, and possess hosts of acquaintances, are likely to invite many young gentlemen with whose families they are familiar, but who seldom have an opportunity of seeing their young friends except for a moment or two during an evening party. It would be strange if, sometimes, these ladies should not fail to recognize a recent guest when they meet on the promenade. Young gentlemen are oversensitive about these matters, and imagine that there must be a reason for this apparent indifference. If young gentlemen were not compelled, or did not choose to make their party calls by card, they would less often suffer through these omissions of courtesy. That a lady invites him to her house is an evidence of her respect; but she can not charge her memory with the features of her multitude of young acquaintances, much as she would like to show them this courtesy. She is very likely a matron with many social cares, and this is one of those exceptional cases when a gentleman should be permitted to lift his

hat in passing, and thus perhaps spare the lady from an after-consciousness of having wounded his feelings. They are neither equals in age nor position, consequently he may use his own refined discretion as to whether he will express recognition or not. It would not be improper, because she is his superior. She desired him to be her guest, which signified her acceptance of his acquaintance, and thus this acquaintance has become something more than formal.

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IV.

STRANGERS IN TOWN.

IT is the rule among our best people to call upon the stranger who is in town. It is contrary to the usages of most polite nations, but we long ago adopted it, and present society approves of it. It has its pleasant and its unpleasant aspects, but the more satisfactory ones predominate. When a circle is large enough, and agreeable enough, combining such varieties of people as make it entertaining, a stranger, who is sensitive and considerate, feels unwilling to intrude upon it without an invitation. To thrust one's self among those who feel no social needs, requires an amount of self-approbation that is not possessed by the really admirable character. On the other hand, it is exceedingly unfortunate for the stranger who must wait outside the gates of society until some one shall think of him, and find time and inclination to go out of a pleasant

circle and invite the lonely individual into its charmed precincts.

But, then, who of us is there who would not rather wait and be sought, than to be considered an eager intruder? Time may seem to move too slowly to the impatient lover of society, but still it does not stand still, and recognition comes eventually if the stranger possesses attractive qualities of mind, manner, and character.

If the visitor brings letters of introduction, an *entrée* to society is easy through the usually observed forms, which will be fully treated in another chapter. If strangers who have come to reside with us, or even to visit our locality, bear credentials of respectability, courteous and hospitable residents will call upon them, after sufficient time has elapsed for the recently-arrived to have adjusted themselves to their new positions.

No introduction is necessary in such case. The resident ladies call between two and five o'clock, send in their own with their husbands' or their fathers' or brothers' cards, and, if they find the strangers disengaged, a brief and cordial interview ends the first visit. This must be re-

turned within a week, or a note of apology and explanation for the omission is sent, and the return-visit is then paid later on. If a card be sent in return for this visit, or is left in person without an effort to see the parties who have made the first visit, it is understood that the strangers prefer solitude, or that there are reasons why they can not receive visitors. The one who has offered the welcoming hand of kindness will have fulfilled a social duty, and there is no reason for regretting the attempt to entertain the stranger. It is more than possible that some unhappy circumstance compels this reserve. At any rate, it is far better to look for some sweet spring as the source of all incomprehensible conduct than it is to imagine an unpleasant or bitter one.

A second visit to the stranger is far more gratifying or satisfying than the first one, because it is an assurance that the older resident really found pleasure in meeting the new-comer, while the first one might have been one of duty or for observation, but the next call is an agreeable assurance of approval.

A gentleman can not make a first call upon the ladies of the family of a new-comer without an introduction or an invitation, even though he be a married neighbor. His lady friend, or kinswoman, may leave his card, and afterward he may receive an invitation, verbal or written, to make the new acquaintance. Under such circumstances the usual formality of introduction may be made by his second visiting-card, which he will send in to announce himself at the time of his visit, provided he pays his respects to the new household unaccompanied by a common friend.

The sending of his card to the strangers was an unmistakable request to make their acquaintance. If his visits be undesirable, the way is opened for an easy method of declining them. His card need not be noticed. This refusal of friendliness is far less awkward and unpleasant for both parties than to ask permission verbally to become a visitor and be verbally rejected. Sometimes there are unfortunate family complications or conditions which compel a refusal of gentlemen's society, but which are unexplain-

able. Painful necessities are oftenest the very ones least easy of explanation. No gentleman possesses a reasonable ground for offense, or for feeling hurt, if he be not admitted as a visitor to a family whose circumstances and conditions are unfamiliar to him. It is not difficult to imagine that the stranger who refuses to accept a new friend is likely to suffer more than the rejected person.

A stranger can make no overtures for acquaintance to older residents, but, as frequently happens in large towns, two men or two women may have desired each other's society for a long time, but the formalities of an introduction have been beyond easy reach. Or their names, even, may have been unknown to each other. They meet at the house of a friend, and conversation, either with or without presentation, often leads to a wish for further intercourse. This desire is expressed, and a mutual interchange of kindly interest and addresses takes place. The question then arises, "Who shall pay the first visit?" This is one of those matters which settle themselves. Mutual liking and sincere expressions

of regard prepare the way for either one to make the initiative call. If one lady be the younger by many years, she should call first. This etiquette is based upon the supposition that the elder lady belongs to a larger circle of friends, and has more pressing social duties than the younger one. If the parties are equal in age and position, the one whose reception-day arrives earliest should receive the first call.

If their "at-home" hours are at the same time, a mutual arrangement, or the urgency of their admiration for each other, will settle this easily enough without formality.

Aged gentlemen or ladies, eminent persons, and clergymen, always receive the first call. It is proper to leave a card for them, even when they are known to be too much engaged either to receive in person or to return calls of ceremony. The card signifies respectful and appreciative remembrance.

No custom is more significant of the highest and noblest breeding and the gentlest culture, than that of remembering the aged by all pleasant formalities. Our citizens are accused by

other nations of indifference to those who are advanced in years. This may be true of selfish people and of plebeians, but it is not true of our refined and high-toned members of society. A thoughtful courtesy and a tender consideration make the late afternoon of life beautiful with respectful regard, even when a lack of familiar acquaintance has withheld affectionate devotion.

V.

DEBUTS IN SOCIETY.

THIS expression really signifies less than it ought in America, and it applies, in its ordinary sense, to ladies only. The gentleman of Europe, especially the first-born in England, is considered worthy of especial notice on the day upon which he attains his majority. Oftener than otherwise, the honors thrust upon him at this time, by those who are beyond the strict limits of kinship, are measured by his prospective importance. It is quite otherwise with the young lady, either in Europe or America. According to the combined convictions and desires of parent and child, the time fixed for the girl to become a young lady, in the estimation of society, is from seventeen to twenty. If there are older unwed sisters, her *debut* is often postponed, for reasons which need no explanation. The mamma determines the time when, by a proper

celebration, her daughter shall be accepted by the world as a fully matured woman, who may receive the homage of gentlemen if she desires their attention. She marks this transition of her daughter from girl-life to young ladyhood by inviting only fitting friends to her house, where she may present this daughter to them as a member of their circle. This ceremony should convey the information to the world that the young lady has been graduated in all the accomplishments and knowledge necessary to make her acceptable to society. In fact, it should mean that she has been instructed in all that deft wisdom which will be required by a *belle* of her circle and a queen of a household, for which she is, as all women are, a candidate.

Especially is it assumed that she has been thoroughly taught that when she enters society she must obey its social laws to the letter, and assume all its duties and its sometimes wearisome bondage.

Young lady readers will object to the assertion that they are candidates for marriage, and it is very common for them to decline wedlock be-

fore they have been invited to accept it, on principles of modesty, just as ambitious politicians refuse offices before nomination. It is natural for women to become wives, and all the proper aims of a girl's life tend toward this relation, the hero of which surely lives somewhere in her hopes of the future, no matter how vague and shapeless that other perhaps unknown but essential party to the alliance may be, who is hidden away in her imagination. He is most certainly in existence, else *débuts* in society would never have been formulated as an essential etiquette.

A *début* is a barrier between an immaturity of character and culture and an admission of the completion of both. Previous to this event a young girl is not supposed to be sufficiently intelligent to be interesting to her elders among her own sex, and certainly not worldly-wise enough to associate with gentlemen.

In New York's best society she is never seen at a party that is composed of mature people outside of her father's house, previous to the finishing of her education ; nor is she present

at any formal entertainment given at her own residence, except it be on birthday anniversaries, christenings, or marriages.

Even admitting that the young girl is precocious enough to be interesting to her mother's guests, and that she has sufficient maturity of intellect, and is discreet in her conversation with her elders, and with gentlemen in particular, a single taste of the fascinations of social life will interrupt the quiet and grave completion of her education, which is supposed to be most serious and absorbing between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years.

This explanation of our etiquette may be received as an expostulation intended for smaller towns where young girls too often enter society before leaving school. If this pernicious custom could only be made unfashionable in localities where it exists, the young girl would submit to remain a student much longer, and her expectant circle would receive a superior woman when she enlarges it with her matured presence.

Just previous to her formal presentation or *début*, her mother and her elder unmarried sis-

ters—if she have them—pay visits, or at least leave their own with their father's and brothers' cards, upon all acquaintances whom they intend to invite to be present at the *début*. Engraved invitations follow this formality, and they are issued about ten or fifteen days previous to the event. If they are sent by post, an extra outer envelope incloses all the invitations that are directed to one family. If they are delivered by messenger, the outer wrap is no longer in use. The post has become as suitable a method as any for conveying social messages. One envelope is directed to Mr. and Mrs. A. If there are more daughters than one, their address is "Misses A.," or, if preferred, "The Misses A." Each son receives a separate invitation. The question need not be asked why the young gentlemen of a household must each be individually invited when the daughters are not, because no satisfactory answer can be given. It is simply the custom. Replies are sent as addressed, though it is not unusual for mothers to answer for their young daughters, but never for their sons.

All the invitations for one family are inclosed in a single outer envelope, which is directed to the head of the household. They are engraved upon cards or upon note-paper. If upon the latter, and a cipher or crest is used, it is placed at the top of the sheet in distinction to letter-paper, where it is printed at the right upper corner. Its engraving is a clear, plain script, without ornamental flourishes. Notes or cards upon which the special purpose of the entertainment is given, with the name of the *débutante* upon them, are sometimes ordered, but this is rarely done, and it has not the sanction of some fastidious mothers.

The following is the present formula :

MR. AND MRS. HENRY WEST LEACROFT.

request the pleasure

of introducing their daughter,

ETHEL AGNES,

to

Monday evening, January 5th, at half-past nine o'clock.

59 Great Hubert Street.

Another method is to inclose the young lady's card in an invitation to a dinner, party, reception, or ball.

A reply to such an invitation, if for evening, should not be delayed beyond five days, and not at all if it can be avoided. If it is a dinner, the answer must be sent within twenty-four hours. It is written in the same form and style as the invitation is engraved :

MR. AND MRS. STILLMAN JACKSON

accept with pleasure

MR. AND MRS. HENRY WEST LEACROFT'S

kind invitation for Monday evening, January 5th.

6 Tudor Place.

December 20th.

A simple *début* is an afternoon "at home" with the young lady's card engraved below her mother's. If she be the eldest it is Miss Leacroft, but if she be a younger daughter she is Miss Ethel Agnes Leacroft. To this afternoon reception no reply is made, but cards must be left in the hall for the young lady as well as the mother, and if the invitation is not accepted, cards must be sent to both mother and daughter.

This is only for the convenience of a hostess with many acquaintances, and of course she keeps a written account of visits made and returned.

When a reply is made to an invitation sent to a mother and one daughter, the elder lady may reply for both, but, if there is more than one daughter, the reply commences thus, The Misses Leacroft, etc. Each young gentleman replies for himself.

Intimate friends may send flowers on the day of the young girl's first appearance, if they please; but it is not a rigid custom. It is only a pretty and pleasant welcome to her as she enters the world.

The mother places herself near the entrance of the drawing-room, and the daughter stands next beyond her, and then the father, if it is an evening reception or a dinner. The mother greets and welcomes each one of her guests, and then she introduces the *débutante*.

Of course, welcomes and brief congratulatory compliments are offered to her by each guest, and then place is made for the presentation of others who are arriving.

When supper or dinner is announced, if there is no brother, the father escorts the young lady to the table, and the mother follows at the last, accompanied by the most honored of the gentlemen present. If there be a brother, the father leads the way with the eldest or most distinguished lady of the party, and the brother escorts the *débutante*, and places her at her father's left hand.

The gentleman who is her partner in the first dance is usually selected by the mother from among the nearest and dearest friends of the family; more than likely he is a kinsman. This is arranged in advance. He dances but once with her; nor does any other gentleman ask for this honor a second time, although he may express his regret to her that such a pleasure is denied him by the natural rights of others who wish to be her partner upon this first evening of her appearance.

Visits of ceremony that are paid to the hostess following this entertainment of course include this young lady, but during her first season in society she has no card of her own.

Nor does she pay formal visits alone. If she be the eldest unwed daughter, her name is hereafter, or at least during one year, engraved as Miss Leacroft, beneath that of her mother. If she have elder sisters at home, her name is engraved as Miss Ethel Agnes Leacroft. During this first season she does not receive gentlemen visitors without a chaperon under any pressure of circumstances. If her mother is unable to receive with her, she declines a visit. After the second season her own separate card may be left upon friends, either alone or with those of other members of her family, if desired.

This formality past, the young lady may be considered launched into that fascinating world of social intercourse and fashionable pleasures toward which she has most likely looked longingly during two or three years.

A young gentleman somehow slips into society without formality. Whether or not it is because during the early years of the man he usually dislikes young ladies who are not his cousins, or because he is off at college and fully absorbed, it is not easy to determine. Certain

it is that the young man finds his way into the charmed circle without much difficulty. He begins by endeavoring to assist his mother at her entertainments, and by being an escort to his sisters on informal evening visits among lady intimates, where his maturity and attractions win for him a future invitation.

If he has been educated abroad, or has been absent from home, upon his return to town his mother or sisters leave his card with their own, which bit of paper signifies that his family expect him to be included in whatever courtesies and hospitalities are extended to themselves.

"The lad seldom longs for society, but the lass craves it the moment that she feels a stir of self-consciousness," insists an observer of the differences between boys and girls. If this be a truth, the necessary dividing line between the miss and the young lady can not be too strongly marked, nor the importance of that formal barrier called a *debut*, be overestimated.

VI.

CHAPERONS AND ESCORTS.

IN our republic it is not that the young woman of good breeding and fair education is made indifferent to appearances, or that she is in any sense unable to take entire care of herself, or that the men whom she is likely to meet upon her own social level are untrustworthy, that etiquette has made chaperonage in New York an established and even a rigid law, as also it is in most Eastern cities. The young unmarried woman neither enters society nor receives gentlemen visitors unattended by an elder or at least a married lady or a kinsman who is nearly related to her.

There are social circles farther inland, and many of them too, where the young woman would feel highly indignant at the suggestion that a third person is necessary to her group for propriety's sake when she receives male visitors

or goes out with a young man to ride or drive. Of course from her mental attitude, from the self-respecting standpoint to which her mind has been trained and the habits of her own life and also of those about her, she is fully justified in her angry protest against the Duenna system that has been wisely adopted in New York. For her to go out with a man unattended by a household friend is not in any sense bad form. Her education permits it and usage approves. The traditions of her family and those of her associates have instructed her in all the proprieties, and she is strong in dignity, discretion, and modesty. She is quite well aware of all the proper courtesies that she may extend to male acquaintances, and equally well of all that are due to herself from them under usual circumstances. She expects them, and she would exact them if they were not offered to her, and she is right. She may receive costly entertainments as amusements from them as proper homage to herself as a woman, or perhaps as their social sacrifices that are no more than the duty of any unmarried or unengaged man to bestow upon any

unmarried woman whose hand is still her own. The customs of the locality and her innate sense of propriety are her guide as to how many or how general these attentions may be. By attentions is meant theatre and opera tickets, dinners, suppers, and the like, but by no means gifts. The latter have quite a different effect upon her sense of delicacy and her independence. This young woman with a sweet modesty, a strong self-respect, and a consciousness of personal power would feel as if she were being watched and suspected if she were limited only to such courtesies from gentlemen as were guarded by a third person, or to visits at which her mother or an elderly relative was necessarily present for propriety's sake.

On the other hand, the young man with similar rearing would rebel against a chaperon as an insult to his honor and to his intentions, and he would also hold it to be a tyranny to the woman to whom he desired to express a respectful civility or an ordinary courtesy. Could he, however, mingle but a little while with society on the seaboard, and observe the effect or in-

fluences which an easy and close hospitality with all Europe has had upon its social customs, he would soon be convinced that it is far better, at least for the young woman, to conform to the usages of aliens in their essential ceremonials than it would be to attempt to establish an independent code for herself.

To the foreigner the guarding of young womanhood from a too familiar acquaintance with what is called "a man of the world" is a mark of tender respect for her. The European venerates this young woman because her family treasures her, and because he does not know how to respect those who are less carefully sheltered. This is his misfortune, and it has added another burden to our own social life. However, it can not be evaded while we intermingle so generally with foreigners and our people intermarry with them. We are compelled to submit to the consequences of their inherited prejudices because they can not escape them, and doubtless would not if they could. And yet we would like them to understand that it is not because we suspect our women of foolishness

or that the young women of our republic lack in self-reverence or a mental capacity that is sufficient for a quick defense of a moral principle or a social propriety, or that we have not a complete confidence in the fine moral sense and chivalric honor of all true American men, that a guardian has been placed over our young sisters. It is to protect them only from the disrespect of those foreign-born men, yes, and women too, who believe in inherited distinctions and class privileges, and who also have a conviction that by nature all youthful women require protection to guard them from falling victims to their own indiscretions of speech and manners, and also to the frivolous influences of the other sex. Of course foreigners can not avoid bringing over with them their own race prejudices, and their own inherited and cultivated family peculiarities which they usually mention as "their social principles." In the presence of a constant flow of international hospitalities no self-regardful young woman is willing to appear in the eyes of others as if she were independent of the proprieties, or as if she were not quite as highly bred and as

tenderly guarded by her own family as are the young women of other countries. Even though she is fully aware that she requires no chaperon, and is amply capable of saving herself from impertinence and from trifling indignities, and that she can always and under all probable circumstances win for herself the most respectful of civilities, still she is glad to permit others to assume this responsibility. Nor yet is she willing to appear in the eyes of her Old World acquaintances and friends as one who could scorn or even be willing to evade such social ceremonies and formalities as are held to be honorable and sacred by the best men and women of Europe. She concludes that if such regulations are befitting the good, the refined, and the self-respecting young women, doubtless they must be essentially needful for the giddy, the unwise, and the disobedient, and she accepts the restriction patiently. Hence, no matter if such observances are convenient or inconvenient, republican or monarchical in their origin, the social fact remains the same that the chaperon has become an established and unevadable necessity, much

to the poor woman's discomfort. The young girl can not go into society without her, and each becomes a burden upon the other. The young lady of fine feeling and gentle consideration makes this position of her elders as easy and as agreeable as possible.

Especially is the relation of chaperon wearisome to the American while in Europe, where no young lady who desires an admission into exclusive and refined circles may appear alone upon the street, even for the briefest distance. Of course an attending maid is not attractive society, and, besides, not all American ladies travel with maids or with companions as do the English and French.

The considerate and kindly young girl often relinquishes her drive or walk rather than weary or bore her elders, and the latter are constantly making unacknowledged sacrifices for the pleasure of their youthful friends. To be chaperoned is considered one of the elegancies of social life, even by those who take small heed of the deeper significance of the custom, and the inauguration of this office is already held by them as one of

the graces of the best society, and they also esteem it as one of its desirable pomps.

This adoption of a fixed law, that is as troublesome as it may be discreet, is another proof of our adaptability to whatever public or private ceremonials or regulations a higher or an older civilization has already placed beyond dispute to be wiser or more expedient than our own earlier usages.

Nor is it to our discredit that we should have considered the safety of society first of all things, and that the best citizens prefer an elaborate ceremoniousness and a rigid conservatism that avoids the chance of evil, and, indeed, all appearance of it, rather than to stubbornly hold to that earlier social freedom between young women and their men acquaintances.

The chaperon enters the drawing-room with her charge at her left, and slightly in advance of her. After she has exchanged the usual courtesies with the hostess the young lady is presented. As she moves on her charge always accompanies her, and a gentleman will not ask the young girl to dance, to promenade, or go to

supper, without first seeking permission of her chaperon, nor will he detain the young lady unreasonably long, if he is considerate and regardful of etiquette in such matters, and no well-bred man can be heedless of the proprieties.

He can not ask a young lady to accompany him to a theatre or other place of amusement without first asking her mother's or her chaperon's permission, and at the same time extending the same invitation to her also. If she consents for the young woman, she has a right, if she be engaged or indisposed, to ask permission to delegate the office of chaperon to some one else, and her request is likely to be granted.

The girl who is eager to climb to greater heights than those to which she was born, not only cultivates and practices at all times the noblest and sweetest graces of womanhood, but she is perhaps even more rigid in the matter of chaperonage than is usual with her elders.

If she desires a high career in social life she must prove her talent and her fitness for it by her familiarity and invariable practice of such refinements and usages as are customary

with the best classes of society. There is no reason why self-made women should not be as worthy of commendation and admiration as self-made men. If this be their hope and purpose they will never accept late suppers or indeed early ones, or be seen in stalls or boxes at theatres, in parties *à deux*, if they are not willing to risk the chances of being excluded from the inner social circles.

At a small theatre party given by a gentleman, one chaperon is sufficient, but two are none too many for parties of eight or ten.

It is in good form for an omnibus to gather the guests for an entertainment, the host calling first for a chaperon, who may be his mother or his married sister if he chooses. If there is one married lady to each four of the party, he may send carriages, unless the chaperon prefers her own, which is more than likely, in which case it is arranged that she call for the young ladies over whom she is to have a care, and the gentleman of the party may meet them all at the place of amusement.

A man may give a tea, a supper, or a din-

ner at his bachelor apartments or at a restaurant in a private room, but he must not fail to secure the presence of one or more married ladies who are friends of his guests, but it is considered even better taste that one of his own married kinswomen preside for him as hostess.

Certainly no fastidious young girl, or one who is regardful of appearances, will accept an invitation to such a party unless she knows that one elderly lady at the least will be present to give dignity to its gayety. Nor will a thorough gentleman arrange an entertainment otherwise. These regulations, of course, are perfectly understood and followed in good New York society, and their infringement is quite impossible to well-trained women and men, hence this chapter is written only for the use of such out-of-town families as desire to establish their own etiquette according to a discreet metropolitan code.

Every American girl is aware that the loftiest position which is open to women in a republic is possible to each and every educated

one of them, and that neither poverty nor obscurity necessarily obstructs her way up to it; therefore, if for no better reason than that she is personally ambitious, she can not be too careful of her conduct or speech, lest she have a blurred or blotted retrospect which envious gossips may bring forth from the past to hurt her with its babble. Even though it may be but a remembered disregard of the best social usages of her times, its resurrection will be an infliction to her, therefore she should follow only the safest of society's customs.

The chaperon will be dignified and yet courteous, not intentionally drawing too much of the conversation into her own currents of thought or interest, but always remembering that she has had her years of youth, and that the young do not enjoy grave subjects when merriment is the object of their meeting together.

She will not be foolishly rigid at general parties about the dancing engagements of her charge, but, when she disapproves of a partner for her, she has need of all her worldly tact

and talent to prevent an unpleasantness, because, for the evening at least, all the guests are equals, and of course the hostess is not to be rebuked then and there by a manifestation of dislike to any one of them, whatever may be felt about the foolishness of her choice when giving out invitations.

The chaperon may express to her charge her disapproval of the attention by suggesting that she looks weary, or that others have claims upon her, or by some other delicate and inoffensive method convey to her the objection she has to such a partner ; and every young girl of good breeding, and a proper self-respect, to say nothing of a grateful regard for any lady who is kind enough to feel and to take a serious interest in her affairs, will make this relation between them, which is difficult at best, as agreeable as possible. A sensitive, well-intentioned and refined man, of course, will not add to the difficulties and anxieties of either of the two ladies, though he may feel that he is misjudged, or is undervalued by one or by both of them. Time will prove his worthiness,

if proof be needed. Only a vulgar man can express anger by his manner, speech or expression, and only a vulgar girl will pretend to misunderstand the sentiments of her chaperon or be disobedient to her wishes. Deference to the wisdom of her elders is counted one of the charms of girlhood.

VII.

VISITING AND VISITING-CARDS FOR LADIES.

To the person unfamiliar with the usages of society, the visiting-card is but a trifling and insignificant bit of paper, but, to those who "know society by heart," it conveys a subtle and unmistakable intelligence.

Its texture, its style of engraving, its size, and even the hour at which it is left combine to place the stranger whose name it bears in a pleasant or in a disagreeable position, even before her manners or personality is able to explain her social attitude.

The higher the civilization of a community, the more careful it is to preserve the elegance of its social forms. It is quite as easy to express a perfect breeding in the fashionable formalities of cards as by any other method, and perhaps, indeed, it is the safest herald of an introduction for a stranger. Their texture

should be fine, their engraving a plain script, their size neither too small, so that their recipients shall say to themselves, "A whimsical person," nor too large, to suggest ostentation.

Refinement seldom touches extremes in anything. No flourishes, but clear, medium-sized letters, with the prefix of "Mrs." or "Miss" in every case, except where there is a title. No lady should use a suggestion of her husband's political honors, religious rank, military or naval position, or his professional occupation, either by abbreviation or otherwise. She does not wish to be received for his sake, but for her own. A lady may be mentioned with the honorable prefix that her husband bears, but she should never assume it herself. It is not etiquette, and is in bad taste. Besides, there is no limit arranged for grades. If one lady is to be called "Mrs. Mayor Puff," there is another who, upon the same principle, should be styled "Mrs. Detective Key," or "Mrs. City Scavenger Spade." Ladies who are not themselves professional never prefix a title to their cards. Nor need they, even when their family

pride of place is at its fiercest, because custom permits her to leave her husband's card with her own upon all those occasions which require hers, and in many instances the use of his card with hers is a matter of strict etiquette.

The card is the medium of social intercourse when we are in our gayest moods, and we choose it to convey our sympathies to the sorrowful. The friendliest sentiments are expressed by a timely card, and our coldest and bitterest dislikes can be similarly carried to an enemy. It tells its little story of fondness or of indifference, according to the promptness and the method of its arrival. It announces a friend, and it says *adieu*. It congratulates delicately, but unmistakably, and it is the brief bearer of tidings which a volume could explain with no more clearness.

The card etiquette of the best society of New York is necessarily different from what it would be if our royalty and rank were inherited, instead of acquired. The same formalities prevail throughout the entire country, with the exception of Washington, which has customs pe-

culiar to its fluctuating political conditions, more or less modified by the presence of foreign ambassadors and diplomats. Card and other etiquette, in that single city, is governed by its own social by-laws, to which no other place could conform, even if it chose to imitate our national capital.

In France the stranger always pays the first visit, either with or without an introductory letter. In England, among equals in rank, an invitation to call follows the leaving of a card, provided the acquaintance is desired. In New York, an introduction by one method or another is a formal necessity. An acquaintance to be formed between ladies who are strangers may be arranged by leaving or sending cards where a personal presentation is inconvenient, and when each one has a proper or justifiable knowledge of the other. The introducing lady or gentleman uses the following formula, writing it upon the upper left of her or his visiting-card:

INTRODUCING

MRS. FELIX FEILD.

This card is inclosed in an unsealed envelope with that of the lady presented. This envelope must be of a fine quality, and either be posted or be sent by messenger. If it goes by mail, an outer envelope which is sealed incloses it.

There was a time when a messenger only was considered either proper or courteous, but the postal delivery is now approved, and is satisfactory for the uses of the greater part of a lady's messages. The lady who receives the two cards must call in person, or, if this be impossible, some member of the family must call, or a letter be sent to explain the omission. Nothing less than this is possible, without offending the introducing party.

If the call is made upon the sender of the two cards, not more than three days should intervene between this courtesy and the introduction. This visit must be as promptly returned, unless an "At home" day is mentioned, either upon the visiting-card or during the interview. If no special civilities are extended, and the introduced lady resides at a distance,

she must leave a card with *p. p. c.* (*pour prendre congé*) written upon it, to give information of her departure ; but, if their acquaintance has gone no further than one visit each, she need not call again, and her leave-taking card closes the courtesy. If she be a resident of the city, she may include the new acquaintance in her formal visiting-list, and invite her to receptions ; but she can not first ask the acquaintance, whom she has herself desired, to a breakfast, luncheon, or dinner, unless there is an especial reason for it which is clearly understood to be acceptable to the acquaintance who has been sought. It would be obtrusive. The first hospitality is a privilege that is very properly reserved to the one who has received an unsought acquaintance.

After a personal introduction, the oldest resident may, if she choose, leave a card, which must be similarly acknowledged within a week, unless a visiting day is engraved or written upon the card of the first caller, when that special occasion can not be overlooked without a return card or a written apology. No further visiting

is necessary, unless mutually convenient or agreeable.

Even this limited intercourse makes frequent meetings in society easier and more agreeable, and it involves nothing. It is simply ornamenting the barren wastes of speechlessness, and makes it easy for the American to avoid the vulgar habit of silence, even at a private party, when he is not introduced. Happily this appalling lack of courtesy, when speech would be a kindly assistance to the hostess, even if not wholly agreeable to guests, is drifting into the past along with many other of those *gaucheries* that are natural to a youthful country.

When a lady changes her residence, she must leave her card, with her new address, upon those to whom she is indebted for a visit; but she need not enter, and she may send it by post to those upon whom she made the last call. Her new neighborhood may be out of the limits of her late friends' visiting range, or it may be located in a street that is distasteful; hence the first card should never include a call upon formal acquaintances.

When a lady leaves town, as usual, for the season, or if she is to make only a summer voyage, she sends *p. p. c.* cards only to such of her friends or acquaintances as she is indebted to for unacknowledged civilities. If she chooses she also sends her temporary address. When she returns to town again, it is not customary for mere acquaintances to show their consciousness of her presence until she is ready to resume social life again, at which time she sends out her visiting-card with her receiving day engraved upon its left-hand corner. A properly-kept visiting record will explain which lady should make the first visit in the autumn.

If a young lady is to be married, she leaves her card in person, about four weeks before the event; but she does not visit. Her mother's or chaperon's card accompanies her own. Their names are not engraved together, as they may have been upon previous visiting-cards. The young lady, being about to assume a new dignity, very properly leaves an independent name and address for each lady member of the household which she honors. Its signification is plain.

She desires to retain their friendship in her new relation; and, as she is about to be the central figure of another house, and the dispenser of its courtesies, it is proper for her to leave this intimation of a future welcome to them. (Other card formalities for weddings will be found in their proper chapter.)

If death occurs in the household of a friend, a card with any appropriate sentiment written upon it, or a box of cut-flowers and a card, should be sent directly. The flowers are not intended for the funeral, but as an emblem of personal sympathy and affection. The same gentle recognition of any felicitous event, such as the birth of a child, a private wedding, the entering of a new house, etc., is a pleasant, but not rigid, etiquette among friends and admirers.

Among acquaintances the card only, with no intruding expression upon it, is left, either with or without flowers—usually without, when a sorrow has fallen upon a family. This card may be that of a stranger even; but it is never sent, and always left in person, or it is carried by special messenger, as a more delicate recognition

of the grave event. This act is one of gentle kindness, and demands no acknowledgment whatever. It is compelled by too delicate a sentiment for the sympathizer to desire a reply.

This etiquette is not a necessity, but is only a proof of gentle breeding and refined manners. It is what the Parisian means by *noblesse oblige*, and it is becoming more and more a custom in New York's best society.

Cards are always left in the hall when entering a reception. This custom makes the debtor and creditor list of the entertainer easier to arrange, because announcing names is rarely done in New York ; and, even if it were, in large circles the memory must be excellent that can retain all the faces of those who accept these courtesies. Provided an invitation to a party or a reception is necessarily declined after having been accepted, cards are sent by messenger upon the same evening, and an explanatory note is forwarded the next day, when more leisure will make its excuses and its regrets comprehensible.

The card etiquette of ladies is not at all difficult. Familiarity with the best usages of

society and a little leisure insure a smooth social intercourse with the world. The unmistakable expression of a card, of course, depends upon the time of its arrival, and also the method of its conveyance. An invitation-card and a reply to it may go by post, but, as has been mentioned, a card of felicitation or condolence never. Turning or folding over the right ends of cards signifies that they are left in person.

The husband's card should accompany that of his wife upon all formal occasions ; but it is no longer stylish for both names to be engraved upon the same card, except directly after marriage. The mother's and the eldest daughter's names are upon the same card usually during two years after her *début*, unless she is earlier superseded upon this list of honor by a younger sister. She may, if not deposed, remain on her mother's card as long as she likes ; good form permits it. When two daughters have been followed into society by a third one, it is a usage that is in good taste to order

MISSES GRANDCOURT

engraved upon a card with the address, and an

at home day. This card is for convenience only, even though each young lady has her separate card for individual uses.

If a chaperon other than the mother introduces and accompanies young ladies into society, her visiting-card is left with theirs to prevent misunderstanding their relations, and to indicate that they are inseparable for the season.

A widow has no card during the first year of mourning, because she does not visit. After that her own Christian name should be engraved upon it, of course with the prefix of Mrs. Of course, this is a painful change to make, but reflection will convince her of its necessity. Her married name is obsolete.

When a son has lately entered society, his mother leaves his card, also her husband's, upon the lady and the gentleman of the house, but her daughter's cards are for the lady only. The son's card signifies that he is in society, and that it is expected that he will be included in the season's general invitations. This is strict etiquette. In a city of busy gentlemen such an arrangement is necessary. It explains family conditions which

otherwise might not be understood; and, after one invitation is received from a lady by the son, he can manage his own social matters with her by making his party call, and leaving his own card and address.

The arrangement of his *entrée* into society is managed by his mother, or by a near lady relative, provided the mother is unable to attend to those formalities which strict etiquette demands.

Not longer than a week must elapse after an entertainment before the cards of all who have been invited, whether the invitation was accepted or not, are to be left by some member of the family, upon both host and hostess, and also upon any one for whom the entertainment may have been given. A single lady member of the family may perform this social duty of returning cards of thanks and congratulations upon the success of the *fête*, because, in the height of a gay season, pressing engagements compel a division of these formalities. Gentlemen can not assist in these social arrangements, and thus relieve the lady members of the family. They may, however, leave a lady's card at a house of sorrow, but not after a festivity.

VIII.

VISITING AND CARD CUSTOMS FOR GENTLEMEN.

AFTER a gentleman has been presented to a lady, and danced or conversed with her, he is likely to be still in doubt whether a further acquaintance will be agreeable to her. He may desire it very much, but be too delicate to give her the unpleasantness of refusing him permission to call upon her, should he beg such an honor.

If he covets her acquaintance very much, happy is he if he have a mother or sister who dwells in the same charmed circle, because his women kinsfolk may be able to easily arrange an acquaintance for him, as is explained in another chapter.

Even though she be a married lady, unless she is a very elderly one, to whom the world in general pays honor, he can not in New York, as in Washington, leave his card at her door in the hope of receiving a recognition of it in

the form of another with the lady's reception day engraved upon it. This city is too conservative, or, perhaps, it is too cosmopolitan to permit such invasions. He must bide his time until an acquaintance through mutual friends disposes the lady to open the doors of her home to him. If she be an unmarried woman, whosoever acts as her chaperon is the one to appeal to for permission to call, and this request can not be too delicately made. A self-assurance that his visits will be acceptable must sometimes be his only encouragement. He is permitted at first to call only upon formal receiving days until he has won his way to a more cordial reception, and this must suffice until he receives an invitation to dinner or to some other limited hospitality to which mere acquaintances are never asked. After this he is at liberty to send a bouquet, invite the ladies out to an amusement, or by any other customary means express his appreciation of the hospitality.

If he is introduced by card or by letter it is always addressed to a matron, even though

its purpose is to make the acquaintance of a young lady. He presents it in person and asks only for the one to whom the card is directed, and this lady uses her own discretion in regard to an acquaintance with any other member of the family. Of course she is compelled to receive the bearer if she regards the introducer, and then, if it be mutually agreeable, there are graceful and easy methods by which to make him further acquainted in the household. Whether he is welcome for his own sake or for that of the person who introduced him, he need not be long in determining.

If the lady to whom the note is addressed is not at home when he calls with it, he does not leave it nor yet his own card, but repeats his visit at another time or sends both in an envelope by mail or by messenger.

An invitation extended to a gentleman who is a new acquaintance, without mentioning the probable time of being able to receive him, is equivalent to no invitation at all, and the bid-den person need not hazard a call.

After this kind of acquaintance is made it in-

volves nothing, and there will be early and easy methods of terminating it if it prove less agreeable to either party than was at first anticipated, and yet there need be no breach of etiquette or courtesy in the separation and not the slightest lowering of the social tone of their intercourse whenever they meet again in society. A natural lack of sympathy or a difference of taste, which is a discredit to neither one, may make a visiting acquaintance quite useless if not unpleasant.

If a gentleman asks for a presentation to an elderly or to a married lady, she understands it to be complimentary, and her manner may say "Thank you!" without emphasizing her gratitude by an invitation to him to continue the acquaintance. When he sees her again he must wait for her recognition, without the slightest intimation upon his countenance that they have met before. When she bows to him, he has an equal opportunity of expressing thanks by his manner. But, if at the introduction she chooses to be sufficiently pleased with him, and she is assured of his social position, she may extend to him permission to pay

his respects to her on her visiting day. But a well-bred unmarried lady can not do this, and the young gentleman, in such a case, must bide his time as before intimated.

The style of the gentleman's card, the hour of his visit, and his address often secure acceptability when combined with the recollection of the host or hostess who made the presentation; and by the same token which he took the trouble to leave at the lady's door she is certain that the gentleman really desires to visit her, and he can never suppose, much less say, that her family name was an unwelcome one upon his list of visiting-places.

This arrangement renders the making of certain acquaintances an easy and comprehensible affair, provided it is agreeable to both persons, and it is a wall of defense against strange and unwelcome visitors. However unpleasant the result may be of an attempt to make a lady's acquaintance, every true gentleman will recognize the necessity of barriers across the sacred threshold of home.

The receiver of a stranger's card, as has been

intimated, makes a careful study of its style. The fine, lusterless texture, and the unpretentious size of the card ; its lack of flourish if it be a fac-simile, though this style is almost obsolete, or its clear script, with the full address of the applicant for acquaintance placed at the lower right-hand corner ; the prefix of Mr., if it be engraved in the latter style, and its omission if the card represent the signature of the bearer, affect the social thermometer unmistakably.

If he have an honorary title or rank he never permits its appearance upon his card. He leaves all admissions of such fact to his fellow-citizens. If, however, he have a professional, naval, or military title, it is etiquette to order it engraved before his name instead of Mr., because it is an explanation or admission which is considered candid and perhaps needful.

To mention that he is in the army or navy, or that he is professional, leads to vague conjectures, or worse, to personalities by way of questions and explanations, and, if ever personalities are admissible in conversation, certainly it is not during a first visit. Therefore, if the

stranger's visiting-card be in perfect taste, his exact rank and calling are given, his hostess admires him unconsciously even before she meets him, on account of this excellence or refinement of form, which proves his familiarity even with the small details of good social position and delicate breeding, however modest his attainments may be. She also observes the hour of his formal call. If he be a business gentleman, who can not command the hours of the day, his first call is made between half-past eight and nine o'clock in the evening. If he be able to command leisure, he calls at the strictly conventional time, between two and five o'clock P. M. The careless, ignorant, or too eager business man will call as early as half-past seven P. M., in fear that the lady may be out. This displeases the highly-bred young hostess. It proves to her that he is either unfamiliar with the elegant etiquette of exclusive society, or else that he scorns formality, and she dislikes both ignorance and indifference to the best social usages.

A gentleman should leave a card in person for both host and hostess within a week after an

entertainment to which he has been invited, whether he accepted or declined the hospitality. The card is imperative ; and a young man must possess scanty leisure indeed if he can not ring a bell and leave this little recognition of a courtesy, even though he does not enter the house.

A gentleman should always promptly accept or decline an invitation to anything. It was once an unsettled question whether or not receptions, kettle-drums, and the like gatherings, required the formality of a reply. That vague doubt is terminated. Every invitation should be answered, except to an ordinary afternoon "at home" or *kaffee klatsch*, and then there can be no misunderstanding. It is not much for the busiest of young men to do this, since the post is the acceptable and prompt medium for this sort of interchange of civilities.

If he receives a note which introduces another gentleman to him it is accompanied by the card of the gentleman who makes the introduction. This is very properly delivered by the postal service, because etiquette between gentlemen permits it ; but he must recognize its recep-

tion in person within three days, or, in case of inevitable failure to do this, he must send a card by special messenger to the stranger, with explanation and the offer of such courtesies as are possible to him, provided, of course, the introducing person be entitled to such consideration. After an interchange of these paper civilities, the acquaintance may proceed, or cease, without unpleasant feelings upon either side, provided the receiver of the introductory card is satisfied that he owes no more than this to the presenting person who sent the stranger to him. If an acquaintance be formed that is agreeable, the receiving gentleman must offer the first hospitable courtesies before he can accept any from his friend's friend. If the latter departs from town after these formalities, he must leave his parting card on the eve of going away. Whenever he returns to the city, he may, if he desires, send his own card, and expect no recognition of its arrival. If it is noticed, he may be convinced that it is for his own sake that the meager acquaintance is revived and kept warm. A gentleman will always leave a card for a

bereaved friend, and, in whatever other delicate and sympathetic ways that are possible to him, he may show his comprehension of the sorrow; but it must be a very familiar friendship indeed that permits him to write of it, or to speak of it when they meet. The days of agonizing letters of condolence are happily past. Etiquette now permits the wounds of the heart to heal, without bruising and rending them by long letters of sympathy.

A gentleman never makes a formal call without asking to see all the ladies of the family. He sends in or leaves his card for each individual. If he be calling upon a young lady who is a guest in a household with which he has no acquaintance, he must ask to see her hostess at the same time, and also send her his card. This visit the hostess can not decline without being inhospitable to her guest. She must go to the drawing-room with her, and be present during the interview.

When a lady has been in society several years, and is still unmarried, she may receive gentlemen visitors unchaperoned, and it is neither

an informality nor an indelicacy, unless the lady insists, by an unmistakable manner, that she chooses to be still considered very youthful.

The mother of a young lady, or any other chaperon, understands, or at least she ought to know, that a constantly reiterated desire by a young man to see herself is simply respectful to her and complimentary only to her charge, and as such an attention a wise and well-bred woman receives it. Should she always remain during the entire visits, the guest is compelled to make himself distinctly agreeable to her, however unsatisfactory her presence may be to him. However the daughter may feel about it, she appears in the visitor's presence to be gratified by it, and the two women may discuss these social matters in seclusion, but they can not alter a social law. Nor can the gentleman evade obligations which the best custom has laid upon him. And besides, if the mother be the cultivated and elegant conversationist which she should be, and which a superior social interchange of thoughts ought to make easy, and even natural to her, she will lend a charm to his visit which is im-

possible to be given by the minds of more youthful people.

A thoroughbred woman is quite conscious of her influence over young persons, and she knows when her presence is a pleasure and a blessing, and when it is a flaming sword, which is not disguised by her polite smile and her diverting talk. If the mother or chaperon is a cultivated woman, and absorbs the attention of a young gentleman, she is either one or the other—a charm or a protector—and it is for the visitor to decide for himself in which character she is hovering about during his visits. The earlier he discovers her reasons for being diverting, if they be other than for the sake of etiquette, the better for all. (Formulas for these matters are given in article on chaperons.)

If a gentleman have sisters or daughters, he will consider these rigid rules none too severe. The man who quarrels with them, or with their enforcement, is just the person for whom they were established by those who, by reason of superior social position, experience, and refined culture, have combined to ordain them.

IX.

AT HOME MATINÉES—INCLUDING TEA AND KAFFEE KLATSCHES.

A RECEPTION after midday may be a very ceremonious entertainment, when it is sometimes called a "high tea," or a "dress *matinée*," with elaborate and costly appointments, or it may be very simple and yet altogether elegant and enjoyable. The latter style of reception is called a tea to distinguish it from those expensive daylight hospitalities which are becoming less and less fashionable in New York every succeeding season. It was at one time, not long ago, mentioned as a "kettle-drum," because it is said to have originated in garrisons, where officers and their wives, who have been accustomed to elegances, are compelled to extend only the most informal of courtesies, owing to the necessary limitations of camp life. They can not provide sumptuous refreshments and expensive table ser-

vice when they invite their friends upon stated occasions. The fascinations which this enforced absence of troublesome and costly elaborateness possesses for civilians, who sometimes imagine that they are compelled to bear the many burdens of ostentation, have combined with the picturesqueness of these social enjoyments in camp to bring the unostentatious "tea" into general favor with fashionable but sensible people.

A card to an afternoon tea or *kaffee klatsch*, the latter being only a change from one simple refreshment to another, signifies street toilettes for both ladies and gentlemen. The hostess is in full dress. She usually invites a half-dozen or less young ladies to assist her in entertaining in the tea-room, provided she has not several daughters of her own. She has also one or more friends at her side to receive with her, unless she is introducing her daughter, or some other young girl, into society. This fashion of receiving is especially approved by the head of the house, because etiquette does not command his presence, and he is thus enabled to escape a fatigue which is difficult to bear after the

pressures of his daily occupations. It is simply an "at home" in the daytime, or, as some ladies have lately styled it, "a social *matinée*," the word *matinée* by general license being interpreted to mean occasions by daylight as distinguished from those at night.

An elaborate reception is preceded by a visit or a call by card upon all acquaintances to whom the hostess is indebted for formal civilities. Her invitations are issued in her own name, with the additional name beneath it, if she chooses, of daughter or friend, provided she proposes to be assisted in her entertainment by another, or if she desires it to be understood as an introduction of a stranger into her circle of society, or possibly it is a compliment to a favorite acquaintance. The following are the customary forms of invitation engraved upon cards of medium size :

MRS. JOHN TALLMAN.

MISS TALLMAN.

At home

Wednesday, December 10th, from four until eight o'clock.

25 North Street.

This card is for a high tea, as the style of its invitation and the hours intimate.

A simple "at home" will be only engraved thus :

MRS. JOHN TALLMAN.

MISS TALLMAN.

Wednesday, December 10th.

Coffee at four o'clock.

25 North Street.

"At home" is seldom engraved upon a card for a very informal occasion, unless it be after a wedding. If several teas are to be given, the lower left corner of the card is engraved :

*Tuesdays in December,
from three to seven o'clock.*

These cards are sent by mail in two envelopes ; but less formal "at homes" when the day and hour for receiving are written in the left corner, are sent in but one envelope. If two or more ladies are to receive with the hostess, their cards may or may not be inclosed with that of the lady of the house, according to inclination.

Only at ceremonious receptions is a carpet

spread from the threshold to the curbstone, with an awning over it. A serving-man in a long coat and gloves, stands by the halting-place to open the carriage-door, and assist such ladies to alight as are not accompanied by a gentleman, or who have no second man of their own upon the box. The luxury of two men upon the carriage is not yet so common in New York that this service provided by the hostess can be dispensed with.

At afternoon festivities gentlemen are seldom able to present themselves, and this man in waiting is really essential both at the arrival and the departure of guests. He gives a number upon a card to the coachman when he arrives, and its duplicate to the guest, so that when the carriage is wanted only the figure is called out by the serving-man instead of its owner's name, as would otherwise be a disagreeable necessity.

The lady guest lays aside her outer wraps in the hall, unless she prefers to go to a dressing-room, to which she is directed as she arrives. She enters the drawing-room a step or so in advance of a gentleman, or whoever accom-

panies her, which is oftener than not a young lady. If she be attended she presents the lady or gentleman, if they are unfamiliar, to the hostess. The latter then introduces the group to whomsoever is receiving with her. After a brief interchange of civilities, the party passes onward to permit the coming guest an opportunity for speech with the receiving party. It is very inconsiderate to engage in any conversation with the hostess and her circle.

Half an hour, or even less than that time, is quite long enough to remain in crowded drawing-rooms. It is kindness to the hostess to make a space for her many acquaintances, and it is possible discomfort to remain, unless there is some special entertainment, such as vocal music or the *matinée* dance. A gentleman sometimes accepts coffee, etc., but he is a rare man who so dishonors his dinner as to eat at a mid-afternoon party. A lady seldom refuses an ice or oysters, and not infrequently she partakes heartily of a sumptuous entertainment, if it be a high tea. Of course the table has been spread with delicacies, that they might be eaten by whoever

could enjoy them, and it is altogether proper to be hungry ; but, that few of our fashionables accustom themselves to accept rich food at this hour of the day is all the information intended to be conveyed by these remarks. It is possible that an indifference to food in the intervals of regular luncheons and dinners has assisted to popularize a simpler provision for the palate at afternoon receptions.

If there be dancing, as is provided not infrequently in very large houses, and is sometimes mentioned on the corner of the card, a band of music is stationed as remotely as possible from the hostess, so that it shall not interfere with her conversation, and the ladies and gentlemen who are fond of it of course seek the dressing-room, in which to deposit their inconvenient outer wraps, etc. The hostess can not leave her position to dance, but her daughters may do so during the latter part of the afternoon. It is not uncommon for the hostess to invite a few young people by special note, to remain and dance after the hours mentioned in the invitation, the refreshment-table providing them with

an informal dinner. She may, if she chooses, make this request verbally during the reception.

Ices, coffee, chocolate, tea, or wine, with fancy cakes or dainty sandwiches, etc., may be passed to such guests as do not care to go to the refreshment-room for more substantial luxuries.

At a tea or *kaffee klatsch*, if there is not a crowd of guests, a tray with coffee and tea, also cream and sugar, is presented almost immediately by a domestic, either male or female, and another one follows with sandwiches, thinly cut and spread, bread and butter, or cakes. If the rooms are filled, the hostess or her assistants invite the guest to seek refreshment where it is served. Some ladies invite several of their young lady friends to supply coffee, tea, etc., instead of a servant. It is a pretty and gracious fashion. The young lady brings one cup at a time, and a plate of food, but does not bear a tray. She remains for a few words with the guest, unless her more practical assistance is demanded elsewhere.

It is not expected that a ceremonious leave-

taking will precede the departure of guests, especially if the drawing-rooms are still well filled. The omission of this formality is not only not a discourtesy, but it is a real kindness. If the reception be a grand and elaborate one, after-calls are *de rigueur* ; but if it be an informal one, a social *matinée* for "tea and talk," after-calls are not expected. Indeed, this variety of reception is scarcely more than a condensation of calls.

Those who are unable to be present send their cards upon the day of the tea, and if possible during the reception hours. These are left upon the hall table in care of the attendant. In case of a series of receptions, none of which are attended, a card must be sent in to the last one without fail, and some ladies and gentlemen carry their courtesy so far as to forward their cards on each day, or evening, to prove that, though absent, they do not forget the hospitality extended to them.

This simple style of reception has become an established custom in New York, and its popularity is more and more extending for evening

hours. Its simplicity of detail spares the hostess many burdens, and leaves her free to be intellectually entertaining. Sociality arranged after this simple fashion has prevailed a long time among people of literary and artistic tastes, where the entire evening is spent in conversation, music, and reading. Bonnets and wraps are laid aside, and the costumes of the ladies are pretty but not *grande toilette*. The gentlemen are in evening dress. The latter do not wear gloves, as was *de rigueur* at one time. Indeed, they are needed by gentlemen guests in private houses only while dancing, their exemplar, and it may be said liberator, having been the Prince of Wales.

The hostess rarely introduces people at large receptions, partly because she is too closely occupied in receiving her guests, and partly because it is not fashionable to do so unless requested. There are those who would consider it an unpleasantly officious act on the part of the hostess to thus insist upon acquainting them with unknown, and possibly unheard of, individuals. The accepted formalities of introduction in New

York are fully explained in another chapter, and referred to in this connection only to explain why they are even less frequently performed at large and general receptions than at small parties, and also to suggest that they should seldom be expected or asked for in crowded assemblies, except as affording gentlemen the chance of asking ladies to favor them with dances. All the same, in the best circles, the ladies chat together, and gentlemen do the same. Indeed, they may introduce each other, if they choose, without making the host or hostess responsible for the acquaintance.

X.

GIVING AND ATTENDING PARTIES, BALLS, AND GERMANS.

THE evening party almost invariably includes dancing, and yet it is considered very proper to direct that the word *dancing* be engraved on the corner of the invitation, and also the hour of its commencing. The ball is, of course, an assemblage exclusively for the dance. This amusement and a substantial supper constitute a ball. The hour mentioned on the invitation is usually much later for a ball than it is for a party. The former ranges from half-past nine to eleven o'clock, though there are few entertainments in New York which commence so late as the time last mentioned. From nine to half-past ten are the favorite hours named in notes of invitation to balls. These notes are sent out in two envelopes, from ten to twenty days in advance of the festivity. The post is the safest messenger for

them, unless the lady issuing the cards can trust her own servant. A single lost card often counts for a lost friend on these grand occasions.

The party note or card is issued about ten or fifteen days prior to the appointed evening; and, unless it be a strictly formal occasion, a single envelope is sufficient wrapping. Of course the post delivers them. The hour mentioned is nine to half-past nine o'clock.

The ball demands the fullest of toilets which the season admits. A few residences only have ball-rooms attached to them, because the limitations of city spaces prevent. If there is no ball-room, and the drawing-room is used instead, a linen cloth is stretched over the carpet, and the furniture is mostly removed. Growing flowers are arranged wherever they can be effectively placed; garlands are hung picturesquely, and cut blossoms give forth their fragrance, and add color and beauty as lavishly as the hostess chooses to provide. The supper-room is arranged with choice articles of food, both cold and hot, and is usually opened at half-past twelve or one o'clock, but light refreshments,

such as ices and cakes, also sandwiches and such drinks as satisfy varied tastes, including coffee, chocolate, lemonade, *bouillon*, and most likely punches and wines, are accessible to guests during the entire ball, and are set out upon side tables, buffets, etc. Waltzing, interspersed with square dances, occupy the time until supper is announced, or the door of the supper-room is thrown open. Immediately after this the German is usually danced. The order of its dances is engraved or printed upon a pretty programme, and the music for each is selected by the hostess, who has an interview with her musical leader for this purpose when she engages him. Some ladies send out this programme with their invitations, but this is by no means as universal as it should be. The minuet and Sir Roger de Coverley dance are returning to favor again, and doubtless they never will go quite out of fashion.

The hostess sends out her invitations for either ball or party after calling by card or in person upon all her proposed guests to whom she is socially indebted. They are handsomely

engraved in script, and issued in her own name for a ball, but in both her own and her husband's name for a party.

The following are the accepted forms for a ball :

MRS. FARQUAHR ALEXANDER
requests the pleasure of your company
on Tuesday evening, October 5th,
at half-past nine o'clock.

Dancing.

28 Silver Place.

Another style of card or note does not have dancing engraved upon it, because some of those who may be invited are too mature to enjoy this activity, or are in mourning, and will be disturbed at the suggestion, even though they would feel hurt if omitted from the list of those who are bidden. Not to hurt these sensitive persons, another card, small in size, with

Dancing

engraved upon it, accompanies some invitations, but is omitted from others.

The party invitation has the same hour for

arriving, but instead of the single word *dancing* in the left corner, it may have engraved upon it

Dancing at eleven.

This hour intimates that those who desire to accept for a little while in the first part of the evening, can leave when the dancing begins, if they choose not to remain.

Of course these invitations must be accepted or declined within two or three days of their arrival. The form of acceptance or regret to a ball or party is written in the name or names of those receiving the cards, thus :

MR. AND MRS. JOHN BROWN DOWS

accept with pleasure [or decline with sincere regret]

MRS. FARQUAHR ALEXANDER'S

kind invitation for Tuesday evening, October 5th.

September 20th.

10 First Place.

An awning to shelter the guests from their carriage to the vestibule and a carpet for them to tread upon from the curbstone to the hall are provided at all balls, parties, and so-called "Germans"—(a term sometimes used to desig-

nate a party in which this dance is the main feature)—and, indeed, wherever ladies in full dress are expected. A serving-man is stationed at the proper place to open the carriage-door, number the carriage, and give the figures that it represents, printed upon a card, in the order of its arrival, to both guests and coachman; so that when it is wanted it can be easily secured, without the unpleasantness of hearing the name of its owner called out through the darkness. Another servant opens the vestibule door without waiting for the bell to be sounded, and he immediately directs the guests to their respective dressing-rooms. Now, just at this point arises a question which has long been in dispute, and it may be settled at once: "Which side of the stairway, the rail or the wall, should be accorded to a lady?"

It has been discussed by gentlemen, as if it were a matter for them to decide, which it is not, by any means. Such ladies as have been given their choice have invariably said: "Permit me to take your left arm with my right hand, and it does not matter whether it is wall or rail

that I am nearest in going up or down stairs. I can better care for myself than you can care for me."

Sometimes the turning or curving of the staircase so narrows the steps on the rail side as to make them dangerous to heedless feet. In such a case a lady must cling to the arm of her escort, or else clasp the rail with her fresh and tightly-fitting gloves, which last she is never willing to do if she can avoid it.

Of course a gentleman can not always wait to examine the architectural peculiarities of a stairway before he decides which arm will best satisfy the lady whom he desires to benefit. He is safe in offering her his left. If she declines assistance, she will choose which part of the stairs she likes best to ascend, and the gentleman will precede her by two or three steps. On going down he is always slightly in advance of her. This arrangement settles the question satisfactorily to the ladies, and gentlemen really have no right to a choice in this matter.

A lady may, and, indeed, she usually does, carry her bouquet (and her fan, also, if it be not

suspended by a *châtelaine*, which it usually is) in the hand which rests for support upon the arm of her escort, thus leaving her left free to protect her train, provided she desires to lift it from the tread of heedless or crowding feet.

The wife enters a drawing-room on the husband's right, or, if the lady be not married, then the eldest lady occupies this position, provided there be more than one accompanying a gentleman. Oftener than otherwise, the lady of to-day does not lean upon the arm of her escort, but advances into the *salon* unassisted. Indeed, the ancient clinging custom is falling into disuse in our fashionable society.

The lady precedes a gentleman by a step or two, when entering or passing out from an apartment, provided she does not retain his arm. In the highest circles in France, the lady enters several steps in advance of the gentleman at a formal reception. Our custom of precedence is not quite so pronounced as that. Possibly, the French lady is permitted this form of superiority in society because she really receives much less consideration at home than the American woman.

After the customary greetings between guests and hostess, and also such others as are receiving with her, the former walk about to find friends, or wait until the younger ones have partners for dancing, after which conversation occupies the time agreeably until supper.

An applicant for the honor and pleasure of a dance is always careful to recognize the office and authority of the chaperon when making his request. This is considered no more respect than is due to the lady who has kindly undertaken the protection of a young lady at a ball.


The gentleman returns the young lady directly to the care of her married or her older lady friend, as soon as the dance is finished.

He may linger there to converse with her, but not elsewhere, according to the usages of our best society.

It is customary for both ladies to visit the supper-room with the gentleman with whom the young lady has last been dancing, and with whom she may be still chatting at the side of her chaperon when this welcome moment has arrived : of course, provided he is at liberty to

offer his services to them. No observable disinclination to accept this escort is possible on her part, no matter what previous anticipations she may have indulged. A ball is too formal a place for any one to indulge in personal preferences of any kind. Even if a gentleman is of the lady's own party, and went to the ball in the same carriage with her, she can not refuse the offer of another gentleman's arm to the supper-room in company with her mamma or her married lady friend. A gentleman is not as free as the lady at this moment. If he accompanies a lady or a party of ladies, he must first be certain that they are properly attended at this important moment, before he can offer his services to others. If it be possible, he is near enough at this hour to offer his service to them, but this is not always convenient.

A "stand - up supper," or what Theodore Hook called "perpendicular refreshments," is usually served at balls and large parties, at which the escort is careful to see that the lady is properly supplied and made as comfortable as possible before he refreshes himself. The lady



can not call upon any one except an attendant for service, nor can she properly receive attention from any one except her escort, unless it be offered by some member of her host's family.

These supper customs apply also to a public ball, where, if an escort overlooks her needs, she must ask assistance only from a servant. Among the few liberties which a young lady enjoys at a public entertainment is the privilege of refusing to dance with such applicants for this honor as she chooses to disregard. Of course she does this courteously and gently ; but one must be a young lady to understand the full delight of this permission. If she refuses an invitation to dance at a private ball, as has been mentioned, she loses the dance altogether, and must sit all through its bewildering and inviting music. Balls terminate by two or three o'clock.

At a party, dancing seldom begins until after supper, as the cards will suggest. Conversation, music, etc., occupy the earlier part of the evening, and the dancing is ended and all departures are made by one o'clock at the latest.

The "German" differs very little in its eti-

quette from that of the party. The leader of the dance is to be selected with discretion by the hostess, and the favors, which are always provided for the dancers, are chosen with individual and refined taste, always avoiding ostentatious display. The hostess is attentive to the ladies, observing if any timid or unattractive guest receives a noticeably small number of these trifles. With tact she quietly provides her with dances that shall make all favors as nearly equal as is possible upon such occasions of competition.

Generally the early part of the evening is spent with the waltz, and after supper the "German." Of course, nobody gives a "German" without being familiar with all the necessary and peculiar *etceteras*, which it is not in the province of etiquette to explain. The card of invitation is usually like that of a party, "The German" being engraved on the left-hand corner, with the hour when the dance is to commence. This mention of the time for opening the dance will be appreciated by all who are familiar with its requirements. If a *coterie* meets for practicing

the "German," it is customary for each lady member of it to invite the club to her home once during the season, and also other guests as agreed upon by by-laws, from among her own particular friends. The cards of the *coterie* are engraved in script, and the monogram selected for it is upon the top of the page. They are furnished by the club to each hostess, and the following is the accepted formula, the card being issued in the name of the mother :

MRS. _____
requests the pleasure of your company
at a meeting of the German coterie,
Tuesday evening, _____
at half-past eight o'clock.

The blank spaces are written in with names and dates as required.

Calls to return thanks, offer congratulations, and for inquiries, are made on the first receiving day of the hostess by each guest who is not a member of the club, whether her invitation was accepted or declined. The members of the *coterie* are not expected to heed this formality.

If the hostess has no fixed day for receiving, a visit should be made to her, or cards left for her within ten days after the German. These *coteries* are among the most fashionable and enjoyable of simple entertainments, because they are less formal, and full dress for ladies is not *de rigueur*. And also because the master in the art of dancing acts in the capacity of chaperon, except when the young lady goes and returns from it, when she may be escorted by a brother, or only by her maid.

XI.

DINNER GIVING AND DINING OUT.

THE history of an unknown civilization might be read in the bill of its fare, and in the forms of its feasting. We need not search beyond the conventionalities of the banquet to inform ourselves of the subtlest perfections of refined taste, or of a semi-barbarism. Between these two extremes stretch vast and varied areas of lessening skill, or of decreasing vulgarity, no grade of which is indistinguishable. Individual awkwardness and stupidity fail to exercise the refinements of the era, and by this test the measurement of its advancement toward superiority is exact and trustworthy. Not that superior methods of eating are the highest of accomplishments by any means, but they are trustworthy indicators of indwelling tendencies and developments.

There are those who reject the highest forms of social etiquette through an assumed superior-

ity to fixed rules ; but an isolated case of absence of good manners, and of high forms of conduct, proves nothing, and, as a modern writer declares, "should be attributed to a personal incapacity for adopting them."

A tendency toward originality in individual cases might increase the charm of social intercourse, and ultimately lead to superior and more attractive formalities; but we have arrived at a sufficiently excellent standard in etiquette to satisfy the most fastidious of dinner-givers and diners-out, especially when we remember that aiming at the possible in these critical affairs is a dangerous experiment. Inharmony is never beautiful, although originality may be, and safety is to be found only in established formalities.

Pendent as we have been between the English style of entertaining, which is a massive solidity, and the lighter and more graceful French, we are no longer vibrating. We have rested ourselves upon a standard that is largely our own, although, like our legal statutes, our social regulations have been formulated from such of the habits of both nations as are adaptable to

ourselves. As we had neither royalty nor rank to decide these matters for us, the time consumed in the adjustment of our social affairs was, very naturally, extended through many years. We became weary of being asked, "How do you do these things in America?" when we had no proper reply to make. "I suppose you have a best society, and I would like, you know, to understand how you regulate it. Does anybody possess a right of precedence at a dinner-party?" inquired a small, but not intentionally impertinent, "my lord" not many years since. "I don't suppose you feel settled in social matters," he went on to say, as if he intended good-naturedly to apologize for all the social barbarities which he had traversed the sea to witness, and the entire absence of which would doubtless have disappointed him.

"Indeed, we do have a best society, and most excellent it is, too, because we recognize superiority without consulting a Doomsday-book. We know exactly what to do for ourselves and for our visitors," was the prompt answer. Of course this reply was part pride and part truth,

and the former sentiment was made just sore enough to compel us to seek after a protection against future hurts of this sort, which might be inflicted by the semi-contempt of a traditional nobility.

The lady who proposes to give a dinner-party, or a series of parties, is exceedingly careful to catalogue all the names to whom she desires to extend such hospitalities. From all these she selects and groups those who will affect each other pleasantly, either by reason of positive sympathy, or by an agreeable contrast of tastes, interests, or sentiments. The differences in social conditions often go far toward deciding upon the groups, but latterly intellectual attainments have established a higher grade of position, and the combinations of guests are based upon mental accomplishments, instead of family connection. In either case the etiquette is the same. As we have no real distinctions of birth, and find ourselves affected by the traditional customs of our ancestry, we too often hunt after a lion or a lioness as a motive for a feast, because this person or personage will make

the formalities of the occasion less difficult of settlement. This hero may not be eminent to a startling degree, but all the same his presence settles beyond question who is to go in to dinner with the host or hostess, and this decision assists the timid entertainers amazingly. Sometimes it is the birthday of the honored guest, the return of a bridal party, a re-entrance into society after an illness, or following a sorrowful retirement from gayety; or it may be the celebration of an achievement, literary, artistic, political, or financial; but being a decided something by which to distinguish a single individual, and to hang upon him or her a reason for receiving precedence over all others on this occasion of feasting, the lady is escorted by the host to the table, and placed at his right hand; but if the honored guest be a gentleman, or the husband of the honored lady guest, he goes in to dinner with the hostess, and sits upon her right hand.

If there really is no person to whom an especial attention is to be shown, the eldest lady (provided she is old enough to be proud of her many years), the wife of the highest official, or

of the most eminent scholar, or the one who is the greatest stranger, is offered the arm of the host.

To give the dinner in honor of some person, or "to meet" a particular party, as the invitation should explain (provided the guest be not unmistakably famous), has an especial advantage in that it settles who shall, and who need not, be present. This is an agreeable and easy method of disposing of our first difficulty when issuing invitations. Those who are not invited immediately understand, by lack of their own affiliations, why they were not included on this particular occasion, and they indulge in no unpleasant speculations about the matter. They know that, when a fitter occasion occurs, their names will be properly grouped, according to their tastes and associations. No explanation is necessary from the giver of a dinner to friends who are omitted. The invitation itself is its own interpretation, should the card fall under the eyes of those who, but for the "to meet" upon it, might feel hurt by a suspicion of neglect.

If the dinner be a very grand and ceremoni-

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ous entertainment, and given to express respect for a well-known individual, and there is time for premeditated formalities, the name of the honored guest should be engraved upon the card of invitation, and sent out from ten to twenty days in advance. Its form will be thus, if it is engraved upon a separate card :

TO MEET

MR. AND MRS. LIVINGSTON LIVINGSTON,
of New Orleans.

It is customary for those who give frequent dinner-parties to order an invitation engraved with blanks upon it, for the insertion of the names of guests, and also the various dates. This card, as far as any improvement can be imagined for it, will serve for all time.

Its form is thus :

MR. AND MRS. JAMES KNOX WREN
request the pleasure of
_____ *company*
at dinner
on Monday evening, _____
at seven o'clock.

11 Clinton Square.

Almost every hostess has one evening in the

week upon which she always gives her dinners, and she does not change it any more than she would her receiving day ; hence she may have that part of her dinner date engraved.

Of course, R. s. v. p. is still seen upon many invitations, but it is falling into disuse, and will soon disappear. It is equivalent to mentioning to your hoped-for guest that you are not quite sure if he knows enough about the customs of good society to reply to an invitation to dinner. However, good form has not yet effectually frowned upon this reminder of our former lack of fine manners.

If an especial honor is intended, or the persons for whom the dinner is to be given are especially distinguished, it is in good taste to order cards for it, thus :

TO MEET

GENERAL AND MRS. REY COLLINS,

MR. AND MRS. KINGSTON WOOD

request the honor

of _____ company

at dinner

on Monday evening, January 10th, at eight o'clock.

12 Villa Street.

Replies should be sent immediately, so that, if regrets are made, vacancies may be filled. A delay is unpardonable. If there is the slightest doubt about being able to be present, the invitation must be declined. If it be accepted, and an insurmountable obstacle comes in between the guest and the dinner, instant explanations must be made, as an empty chair at a feast is a depressing object, and usually leaves some lady without an escort, or some gentleman alone.

The following is the customary formula of acceptance :

Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Harrison

accept with pleasure

Mr. and Mrs. Kingston Wood's

kind invitation to dine with them on Monday evening,

January 10th.

31 Septimus Avenue.

If unable to accept, the refusal must be expressed in language that conveys real sorrow. The following is a prevailing style of declination :

*Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Harrison
regret most sincerely that a previous engagement
[or an illness or sorrow, etc.]
makes it quite impossible for them to accept
Mr. and Mrs. Kingston Wood's
kind invitation for Monday evening,
January 10th.
31 Septimus Avenue.*

Of course the formality or informality of the acquaintance between the parties regulates the method and clearness of this refusal of an invitation.

If the note sent in reply be bordered with black, that tells its own story; but there are many things which may not be mentioned, but which make gayeties unwelcome at times, and every gentlewoman will receive declinations to her invitations in the full belief that the regret is genuine.

To be prompt, but not too early, for dinner, is a rigid necessity that requires no explanation. Five or ten minutes is the customary interval between arriving and the dinner hour. Earlier, the hostess may not be in waiting to welcome

her guests. Later than this, time for introductions, and arrangements for escorts to the table, may not be sufficient. If the party is large, a diagram of the table accurately drawn, with the name of each lady and gentleman written in its place, is in each of the dressing-rooms, and the servants in attendance call attention to it if a guest is likely to forget to study it. This diagram explains whom each guest is to have as partner at table, and upon which side of the host each pair is to look for places, which are again indicated on the table by location cards. This arrangement spares both host and hostess much strain upon their memories at the moment of receiving a large number of people. The gentlemen, if unacquainted with the ladies assigned to them, remind the host or hostess of this fact, and the presentation is speedily made. In England this plan does not prevail in private houses, and sometimes the gentleman and lady assigned to be seated together at table are unaware of each other's names. It has happened that the host or hostess has said to a guest, "You will please take in the lady in blue

standing by the piano." Of course, this is an extreme case of social superiority and personality which we do not propose to imitate. If the guests be selected from those who are already acquainted with each other, or if they are not, and it is a small dinner, it is still in good form for cards to be left on a tray in the hall for the servant to offer to gentlemen as they descend from the dressing-room. Each guest finds his own with a lady's name, also "right of host," or "left of host," written upon it. If he is acquainted with the lady he seeks her as soon as he has greeted his host and hostess. If he does not know her he mentions it to one of his entertainers, and he is immediately presented.

This plan lessens the difficulty of finding assigned positions in the dining-room, even at a small table. A card, an object of art, a painted satin ribbon, etc., with the name of a guest upon it, is placed by each person's plate. The *menu* card—if one is used—is laid beneath it. Sometimes the *menu* is highly decorated and made prominent, but since it is becoming less fashionable, because less refined and far less

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sensible, to provide a large number of courses, even for a ceremonious dinner, the *menu* is not so often furnished as formerly, and it is never seen at a dinner for eight or ten, or even twelve persons.

The dinner is announced by the butler, who throws open the doors of the dining-room, and bows to the host, who is alert and waiting, without seeming to wait for this silent information.

He immediately offers his left arm to the lady for whom this honor has been already determined upon, and leads the way to the dining-room. He places her at his right hand. Other gentlemen and ladies follow, the hostess being the last, and she asks the selected gentleman if he will take her in to dinner. The offering of the left arm on this one occasion had its origin in feudal times, when the right hand was kept free for handling a sword, which was always worn at feasts, and it has survived all the social changes of years, and is likely to continue in good form as long as ladies wear trains, which they must protect, and which gentlemen do not like to tread upon. Unavailing efforts have been

made to change this custom, and yet there is no reason why it should not remain as it is, except that some gentlemen do not like the trouble of remembering that this special courtesy to women asks for the left, while all other assistance to them demands the right arm. Etiquette insists upon the left, and that should be reason enough for proffering it.

Each pair having found their places, the lady at the right, the gentleman arranges her chair, and both stand until the hostess is seating herself, and then each lady guest follows her example, and the gentlemen do the same. This is done as quietly as possible, because nothing is less elegant than a bustling manner.

If there be an equal number of ladies and gentlemen, and they are arranged at table alternately, in pairs, the host and hostess can not sit exactly opposite to each other, provided the table be filled. This difference in the *vis-à-vis* of hostess and host is of slight consequence when a dinner is served *à la Russe*, or even if it be not, because the centers, instead of the ends, of a dining-table are usually occupied by the enter-

tainers. Each guest accepts whatever is served, and eats of it, or at least seems to do so, and exhibits an appearance of enjoyment.

It is a proof of fine breeding to seem to be happy, whether one is content or not. We have no right to permit our mental or physical tastes or moods to depress or annoy other persons. Moods should be our own secrets, and, if we have them not well in hand, we may be sure that there is something for us yet to attain that we can not afford to live without, and that is a triumph over ourselves. One often feels the need of "a perfect self-containedness" at a dinner-table where food and sentiments may not be to our liking.

If wine be provided and the guest does not approve of it, a private table is not a suitable place for expressing individual convictions. He may receive the wine in the different glasses sparingly, and make no comment. If toasts are drunk, he will lift his glass, and be courteous. At a public dinner, the freedom of the occasion permits a noticeable rejection of wines; but to accept private hospitality affords no liberty of

criticism upon the conduct of the host. Both reproof and commendation are alike vulgar and discourteous. As formal dinners are now served *à la Russe* entirely, the intellectual entertainment is less difficult of management than when the host and hostess used the soup-ladle and the carving-knife. The fruits and nuts being a part of the table decoration, and already picturesquely arranged, the feast should proceed as smoothly and deliberately as did a familiar *minuet* in our granddames' *salons*. The hosts have really nothing to do but to be agreeable.

When the dinner is over, the hostess bows to the lady at the right of the host, rises, and all rise also. The gentleman who took the hostess to dinner goes with her to the door, and stands there until all the ladies have passed out, when he returns to the table. The host changes his seat and places himself at the left of the special guest, and the others group about them. The wines and liqueurs, also cigars, if there is no smoking-room, are placed by the host, and the servants leave the room. In offering wines, etc., the host passes them to the left, and there is a

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significance in this courtesy which need not be explained. Their absence from the drawing-room is not a prolonged one. Some ladies object to this separation of guests, but really there are reasons for it. It permits an easy regrouping of guests, where each may find opportunity for talking with a chosen friend, their pairing at table having been not of their own seeking.

Coffee is sometimes served after dessert, and sometimes it is brought with the tea into the drawing-room a half an hour or less after the gentlemen have returned to it. If it is served here it is placed upon a table with the tea-urn, and the hostess or her daughter sits by it and turns it out, and the gentlemen hand it to the seated guests. They are followed by a servant with sugar and cream, and a small *carafe* of brandy, also wafers, tiny sandwiches with anchovy or *pâté de foie gras* in them, etc.

After this service any guest may take leave if he have engagements, and it is not expected that any one will remain after eleven o'clock. If an engagement makes a very early going imperative, the guest mentions it to the hostess

before dinner, and there is no leave taking. The departure is made unobserved if possible. The hostess, who is familiar with the best usages of society, understands unspoken *adieux*, and she is grateful for them. Quiet withdrawals that do not suggest the departure of others are one of our many pleasant customs taken from Parisian formalities.

As it is strict etiquette that a hostess must pay a visit to each of her proposed guests before she sends dinner invitations to them—provided she owes them calls—so it is obligatory that each person who receives a request to dine, whether accepted or declined, must make a call upon the hostess within ten days, except when grief or illness has been mentioned as the reason for sending a regret. This call should, if possible, be made upon the hostess's receiving day, or, if not, cards must be left in person with their ends folded over.

Dinners, above all social occasions in New York, are the most agreeable opportunities for fine conversations, and a display of brilliant wit. The woman who talks well is forgiven

her brightness if she will use it to enliven a feast.

Brillat-Savarin, the most intellectual of all dinner-discoursing men, not only invented foods, but dining rules, which no entertainer can afford to be ignorant of. Those who are able will do well to put them in use. Indeed, many of our hosts have already applied them as far as possible. The following are his directions for giving an agreeable dinner party :

“ Let the number of guests not exceed twelve, so that the conversation may be constantly general.

“ Let them be chosen so that their occupations are various, their tastes analogous, and with such points of contact that there will be no need for the odious formality of introductions.

“ Let the dining-room be brilliantly lighted, the cloth spotless, and the atmosphere at a temperature of from sixty to sixty-eight degrees of Fahrenheit.

“ Let the men have wit without pretension, and the women be pleasant without being coquettes.

“Let the dishes be exceedingly choice, but small in number, and the wines of the first quality, each in its degree.

“Let the order of serving be from the more substantial dishes to those that are lighter, and from the simpler wines to those of finer flavor.

“Let the eating proceed without hurry or bustle, since the dinner is the last business of the day; and let the guests look upon themselves as travelers about to reach the same destination together.

“Let the coffee be hot, and the liqueurs chosen with particular care.

“Let the drawing-room to which the guests retire be large enough to admit of a game of cards for those who can not do without it, while leaving ample scope for after-dinner chat.

“Let the guests be detained by the social enjoyment, and animated with the hope that, before the evening is over, there is still some pleasure in store.

“Let the tea be not too strong, the toast artistically buttered, and the punch skillfully made.

"Let everybody leave before eleven o'clock, and everybody be in bed by twelve."

As we are a business people, gentlemen without wives, mothers, or sisters to carry their cards for them, are permitted by the strictest approving etiquette to send them by post. Of course this is only done when a call in person, or by the hand of a relative, is impossible.

Ladies go to a dinner-party in whatever is considered full toilette for that season, and the gentlemen also. Gloves are removed after being seated at the table, and they need not be replaced again during the evening, unless there should be a dance.

XII.

BREAKFASTS, LUNCHEONS, AND SUPPERS.

A COMPLIMENTARY and formal breakfast is usually given by a Parisian at the hours which are customary for this meal when eaten in private by fashionable people. The time varies only slightly in different elegant establishments, vibrating between half-past nine and eleven o'clock.

Guests to an exceedingly formal breakfast in our city are bidden at twelve, but really social breakfasts, such as are often extended to a stranger in town whom a friend desires to present to his or her own immediate associates, is seldom later than half-past ten, and a half-hour earlier is the time oftenest mentioned. Of course, this is a real breakfast, and not one with at least two private luncheons preceding it.

Eager as some of our citizens may have been to follow the examples of nobly-born foreign

society, when it came to deciding upon the hour for our breakfasts our human nature revolted against such a tormenting postponement of this nominally first meal of the day. Not but that we all know that the hospitality called a breakfast, which is arranged for twelve o'clock, is simply a disarrangement of the usual order of the names of one's meals, and possibly a reversal of their *menu* also ; but our social code rejects English etiquette in this entertainment most decidedly.

It is not improbable that this early and really charming method of entertaining a friend may become a movable feast, and its time be fixed at a still earlier hour. Macaulay said : "Dinner-parties are mere formalities ; but you invite a man to breakfast because you want to see him ;" but then Macaulay really belonged to the nobility of letters rather than to that rank which lives to support its titles.

Both gentlemen and ladies may be guests at the breakfast-table, but ladies only usually receive invitations to a luncheon-party. The breakfast is a less troublesome entertainment,

and far more social and enjoyable than a dinner. People meet before the occupations of the day have wearied them, or its pleasures have given birth to satiety, that most appalling of grievances to the lady or gentleman upon whom society makes constant demands. Business gentlemen can enjoy these semi-early gatherings but seldom; but to literary persons, and to men of leisure, they are as convenient to attend as an evening-party; and possibly to the former they are more acceptable, because the night-time has become, through inherited tastes and tendencies, the too common hour for working with the brain.

Invitations to a breakfast, unless it be a grandly important mid-day affair, are written, and thus need not be issued more than five days in advance of the entertainment. Indeed, a breakfast may be almost *impromptu*, and not shock the social dogmas of the very severest of our formalists.

The invitation may be in the form of a friendly note, or it may be the lady's visiting-card which conveys the request, if this be en-

graved after the customary form prevailing in New York, with the address in the right-hand lower corner, and the ordinary day for receiving callers upon the left. Below the lady's name may be written :

BREAKFAST AT TEN O'CLOCK,
January 12th.

If another than the usual "at home" day be preferred, an ink line may be drawn through the engraved day of the week, and the following form is written upon the card :

BREAKFAST, FRIDAY, AT TEN O'CLOCK,
January 12th.

If it be a luncheon the form is the same, but the hour is from half-past one to two o'clock.

Numbers are spelled out upon a card, and figures are used only for the address.

This breakfast should never be elaborate, but it can not be too dainty in its food, or in the appointments of the table. The best of everything, prepared in the choicest of styles, but nothing heavy, nor excessive in quantity, should

be provided. Walking costumes are worn by both gentlemen and ladies, also visiting-gloves, which are removed after being seated at table. The lady lays off her wraps, but not her bonnet, and the descent from the dressing-room and greetings between hostess and her guests are just the same as at dinner. If it be a large breakfast or luncheon, and gentlemen are guests, a tray with cards, upon which the name of each is written with that of the lady he is to take to the table, is placed in the hall. He picks out his own card and seeks the lady after he has greeted the hostess. If he is unacquainted with her, he asks the hostess to present him. By attending to this little formality he makes entertaining easier for all. If there are more ladies than gentlemen, each is informed with whom she is to be seated. If the party is of ladies only they follow a lady leader, and find their places by the cards which are laid by their plates. If the host is present he conducts the eldest lady or the one entitled to the highest consideration, because she is a stranger, a restored invalid, a recent bride, or who for any

reason which is, perhaps, only temporary, the person to receive this mark of respect. If there is no host, the hostess will have selected some friend to be her *vis-à-vis*, and lead the way with the guest selected, and she follows last with the person whom she is to honor by a seat at her right.

The food is served from the side-board or upon the table, in courses according to taste, or perhaps convenience.

The only difference between the formalities of serving a breakfast or luncheon and a dinner is that the coffee, chocolate, and tea are grouped about the hostess, and turned by her own hand for the first, but not for the two last, and the courses are more delicate and fewer in number.

Guests depart within half an hour after leaving the breakfast or luncheon table, unless music follows. Calls of formality are not expected after a breakfast or luncheon that is given in a simple fashion, but they must follow grand and ceremonious ones. The latter demand handsome carriage toilettes, with evening bonnets for the ladies, and dark frock-coats and vests, with

light trousers, neckties, and gloves, for the gentlemen.

The small luncheon of from eight to twenty is conducted in the same style as the breakfast, but the very large one, with from thirty to sixty guests, is arranged for both drawing and dining rooms, where small tables, for four persons each—*parties carrée*—are carefully grouped for social enjoyments. Sometimes very large luncheons are given to meet a lady of note, or to introduce a stranger, in which case they are called progressive luncheons.

Guests reply to the invitation immediately, and the hostess gives her orders to the caterer to supply the little tables, small chairs, and the luncheon, for a fixed number of persons, she of course deciding what shall be upon the bill of fare. The guests present themselves in handsome visiting toilettes, and are in their bonnets. They remove their gloves at table. Several diagrams of the tables and their places, with the names of the guests upon them, are placed in the dressing-room, so that each guest may easily find her own location. They are

received by the hostess and presented to her friend or friends in a library or other reception room, where they wait for the announcement of luncheon. The guest of honor, if there is one, is seated at a table near the center, and between courses two of the ladies who are seated at the table with her and the hostess rise and exchange seats with others whose names the hostess mentions to them. This change is made several times during the entertainment. Ladies at other tables also exchange places if they like during the removal of plates, each one carrying her napkin with her.

This style of luncheon is in high favor with those who entertain extensively, and, if expense is of small consideration, it is an easy and certainly a most agreeable method of being hospitable. Of course, after-calls within ten days are obligatory.

Suppers are oftener for gentlemen than for ladies and gentlemen, and ten or eleven o'clock is the usual time for serving them. There are game suppers, fish suppers, wine suppers, and champagne suppers, each one of which differs in

the appropriate supplies for the table. But the formalities of the occasion, or, rather, the informalities, are all of the same kind. The invitations may be made at interviews, by friendly notes, or by the host's visiting-card, with

*Supper at ten o'clock,
Saturday, January 20th,*

written upon it.

If it is a fish supper, only a little food except that which once lived in the water is provided; salads and fruits, without a sweet dessert, complete it, with the additions of coffee and such wines as the host chooses for his guests.

A game supper is confined almost strictly to wild fowl, with wines and coffee; but the dessert may be pastry, creams, and *bonbons*.

A wine or champagne supper is made up of a variety of luxuries, and differs from the dinner only in the cold fillets of game, boned turkey, spiced fish, etc., instead of meats that are all hot. The dessert is of various rich compounds, that are delightful to the palate of the epicure,

but which mean heaviness and headache in the morning.

One or two o'clock finds the party dispersed. They are usually called "bachelor suppers," but why this name is provided for this feast it is difficult to determine, because the most excellent and really wonderful suppers of this sort are sometimes given by married gentlemen.

XIII.

OPERA AND THEATRE PARTIES, PRIVATE THEATRICALS AND MUSICALES.

OPERA and theatre parties are among the delights of the fortunate, and they are common with rich families, although they are more frequently given by bachelors, who have no well-equipped homes to which they can invite guests, and thus cancel some of their many social obligations.

If one of these costly entertainments is to be given by an unmarried man, he first secures an acceptable *chaperon* for the young ladies of his proposed party. If she be his own kinswoman, all the better for the harmony of the affair. This selection spares him the unpleasant perplexity of choosing from among the mammas of his young lady guests. He proffers his invitations in person, or by note, soliciting first the consent of the mother that her daughter may

be his guest for the evening, at the same time mentioning what married lady will accompany them, and also furnishing the names of the gentlemen who are invited to be present.

If a dinner precedes the theatre or opera—which, by the way, is an excess of generosity—it is usually given in a private room of some hotel or restaurant, or, perhaps, at the house of a friend, after an English fashion.

The usual dinner formalities (*see* "Dinner Giving and Dining Out") are followed, the matron of the party, of course, acting as hostess. The lady-guests, if not accompanied by father or brother, are usually attended by a waiting-woman, who may return home in the carriage to come back again for her mistress at the hour appointed, which is likely to be half-past twelve.

The dinner hour is usually six o'clock for this style of party. Retiring from the table the party proceeds to the opera in carriages or a carry-all furnished by the host. Boxes have necessarily been secured, because the party is in full dress for the dinner.

After the amusement, the guests return to the banqueting-room for slight refreshments, and then they separate, a gentleman accompanying each young lady, provided only her waiting-woman calls for her with her carriage. If her father or a kinsman comes for her, the gentleman who has been her attendant during the evening escorts her to her conveyance. He calls upon her within three days to inquire after her health, or he leaves his card, provided a visit be impossible to him.

The bachelor host is compelled, by the laws of our best society, to pay his respects and return thanks to mother and daughter within a week, for the honor and pleasure he has received. The young ladies pay an early visit of thanks to the friend who so kindly chaperoned them.

A less elaborate, but scarcely less formal, affair is the opera or theatre party which includes only an after-supper. In this instance the host calls upon his anticipated guests, and, after receiving an acceptance of his invitation (which must also include a gentleman member

of the family, or a near kinsman of the young lady, or an elderly lady), he leaves entrance-tickets, and the party meets at the place of entertainment. If the invited guests do not keep carriages, the host may send them, if he chooses, but this is not strict etiquette. In some instances a private omnibus is sent out to collect the guests.

After the amusement, the party is conveyed to a fashionable restaurant, or to the house of a friend, where a supper is in waiting. The host arranges for escorts to the table, and afterward it is not uncommon to dance a little while, if the house or room is private, and a piano is sufficient for the music. The chaperons of the party decide when it is proper to go home. (For other particulars *see* chapter upon Chaperons).

The latter style of opera or theatre party is by far the most popular of the time, and is, of course, less expensive and troublesome to both host and guests. The more elaborate formalities, as was suggested, are only provided by the very rich, and mothers of refined daughters do

not encourage ostentation. The usages for these costly pleasures are furnished only because an account of the etiquette of New York would be incomplete without them.

In the least elaborate of the two forms, the young ladies are expected to be as rigorously attentive to the duty they owe to their chaperon as if there had been a ceremonious dinner ; and the host will as carefully follow the proper custom of calling early upon the families of each of his guests as if he had given a banquet instead of a supper.

As club life among gentlemen tends more and more to postpone marriage, this method of entertaining is likely to increase in our city. Of course there is no objection to the custom of opera and theatre parties in their most refined forms and usages ; but an hotel dinner and supper lack the charm which domestic hospitality should hold for our highly-bred people. Of course this plan diminishes the care which entertaining is likely to bring to the dinner-giving host and hostess, and it does not greatly increase the expenses of canceling social obli-

gations. Eight, ten, or twelve guests are the customary numbers invited to such a festivity, the smallness of the circle or *coterie* adding much to its delights.

If these parties are given by a lady in her own home, the invitations are issued by informal notes in her own name, and the dinner almost invariably precedes the public amusement. After the opera or theatre, it is proper for her to invite her guests to a restaurant for a light refreshment, but she oftener than otherwise begs them to return to her own residence, where a dainty supper awaits them. A lady-guest may, however, excuse herself from this after-part of the hospitality if she pleases, and not give offense. Party calls follow in the usual manner.

If private theatricals or music is to be a part or all of the entertainment at a gentleman's residence, the word *theatricals*, or *musicale*, is written upon the left lower part of the card of invitation. If the pleasure be accepted, a prompt attendance is compulsory.

The music is selected and rehearsed, even though by professionals, and it is all the more

needful for *amateurs*. The *programme* for the latter is written out, tied by a ribbon, and each guest receives one upon entering the room. Sometimes the programmes are illuminated by the hand of the hostess, or she employs some deft person to do it for her. If it is a grand *musical*, with professional performers and singers, the list of artists and their numbers should be printed in colors, or in gold or silver. Theatricals always have a printed programme.

Camp-chairs must be arranged, and, if dancing is to follow, a linen cover may be stretched over the carpet. Each guest will be as punctual as if for a public amusement. After the music or play is finished a servant speedily and quietly removes the folding-chairs. The supper is served, or refreshments are passed, and a dance or conversation completes the evening. Sometimes dancing is an important part of the hospitality, in which case it is written or engraved across the invitation thus :

THEATRICALS AT HALF-PAST EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Dancing at eleven.

If the company is desired to wear fancy

dress, or be masked, the words *fancy dress*, or *bal masqué*, may be written at the usual left lower side.

This announcement may be engraved if the party is to be an elaborate one, and its amusements may be prominently stated in a line of their own, extending through the center of the invitation.

A character, or author's party, is one of our latest favorites. The name of the author from whom the characters are to be selected is engraved or written upon the card of invitation. After the host and hostess's names, and the usual request, it is customary to add :

In character from "Waverley,"

or from any other author whose heroes and heroines are familiar to general society, such as Dickens, Bulwer, etc. Invitations to a character party should be issued from three to four weeks in advance, to give ample time for refreshing the memory and preparing costumes. If the courtesy be accepted, it is rude to appear at the party in any other than a fitting character and costume, according to the host's desire.

XIV.

ETIQUETTE OF WEDDINGS.

HOWEVER hostile the aggressively independent American may be to conventionalities of all sorts, and deeply as his scorn of etiquette may have been planted and rooted, and vigorous as may be its present growths, marriages can not be conducted without at least some little ceremony. There are formalities which can not be escaped at weddings. Even at that simplest of services, a marriage between Quakers, the witnesses are compelled to sit in silence—that most awful of conventionalities to the person who abhors etiquette and ceremony—until one or the other of the two aspirants for a wedded life is moved by the spirit within to announce this intention audibly.

The law enforces a ceremony, and the gently-bred have thrown about this unpicturesque but jurisprudential formality certain beautiful and

refined customs, which, with harmonious variations, have been adopted by, and into, our best society. As the dress of the youthful bride is white, an artistic variation of the fashion of it is admissible, and even agreeable, but no one would mistake it for a garment intended for another festivity. Etiquette has, in the same spirit of liberality, established a formula for the celebration of marriages, and each bridal pair endeavors to vary and beautify these ceremonials by an individual and poetic charm, without really departing from those customs which time and long establishment have made venerable and impressive.

The announcement of an engagement of marriage has no rigid formality in New York, and yet a betrothal is made known to the friends of the promised pair in some pleasant manner. Sometimes a dinner-party is given by the family of the bride-elect, or it may be enjoyed at the home of the groom (when the bride and her immediate family must be present), and the host announces the agreeable intelligence just before rising from the feast, when a general out-

burst of good feeling and congratulation takes place.

Good-natured gossip does the rest for the social circle of both the gentleman and lady most interested. Congratulations by note speedily follow, also the sending of flowers to the lady, calls, etc.

Sometimes it is done by note from the mother of the bride, or from the bride herself to her very intimate friends. The groom does her same by his near and dear associates. Of course these notes receive immediate responses.

Among families who entertain generously, dinner, or evening parties for dancing, or for opera-going, are given to the engaged couple by their friends, and the plighted pair appear together and receive congratulations.

The friends of the bride call upon her, or leave cards, and, as an announcement of an engagement is made at no great distance from the date fixed for the marriage, the bride does not pay ceremonious visits in the interval. It is customary, however, for her to leave her last visiting-card in person at the doors of her

- friends' residences at the time, or just before, her wedding invitations are distributed ; but she does not enter, except it be to visit an invalid or an aged friend.

This last distribution of a proof of her remembrance is almost like a memorial, because the bride will not again use the name of her own family. Consequently this call before marriage is one of strict etiquette, which she can not well escape.

Her wedding-cards are sent out at least fifteen days before the ceremony is to take place, and oftener much earlier. Invitations to remote places are forwarded sooner, so that parties who propose to be present can arrange to make the journey.

The invitations to the marriage-ceremony are sent in the name of the bride's father and mother, or of one alone if one only be living. If the bride stands in other relationship, like that of ward, niece, granddaughter, cousin, or simply friend, to the persons or person issuing the invitation, the fact of this relation is noted in the formula in place of the word "daughter."

Accompanying the engraved note is a card of invitation to the breakfast or reception for such persons as are entitled to be bidden to partake of the festivities. Very handsome church weddings are often carefully guarded by the master of ceremonies, and no one can enter the church without showing cards of admission.

As a place of worship, of course a church should be open to all ; but liberties which appear to be proper are not upon all occasions agreeable in their consequences. Without these tickets of admission, the gentleman in charge of the ceremonials could not distinguish the plainly-costumed friends and acquaintances of the bridal party from that eager and idle rabble which would otherwise crowd the church, just for the satisfaction of looking upon that never tiresome spectacle—two persons who have come together to show publicly that they fully believe they were created to enjoy each other's society for ever and ever.

These tickets of admission are unwillingly used ; but experience in New York has proved

that there are weddings at which they are an unpleasant necessity.

One or more of these cards is also enclosed in the envelopes which cover the ceremonial invitation and the reception-card. They are intended for distribution to personal friends of the invited, and also for the use of servants who accompany guests to the church.

Friends who wear mourning costumes usually enter the church by these cards, quietly and early, and hide themselves in the crowd to escape the eyes of the bridal pair. Pleasant omens are not suggested, by those who are supposed to be wise in these prophetic phenomena, by one coming to us dressed in crape. Hence this delicate custom among the sorrowing, of absenting themselves from the festal part of weddings, and also of making themselves invisible to the marriage-party while they are present in church to join in the prayerful ceremony of the hour.

Invitations to weddings are now engraved upon one sheet of paper, the separate cards of the bride and of the groom being seldom in

use. The following form is preferred for the engraving, which is plain script. The paper is thick, fine, and shaped so as to fold once. If cipher, monogram, or crest of the bride's family be used upon the paper, it should not be printed in color for weddings, and the center of the top of the page is the proper position for it.

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER

request your presence

at the marriage of their daughter,

MATILDE ALICE,

to

MR. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON,

on Tuesday morning, September tenth, 1878,

at eleven o'clock.

St. John's Cathedral,

New York.

(The word presence, instead of company, is rather the more dignified and impressive, but the latter is frequently used.)

For such as are really friends of the party most interested in the marriage, another card is inclosed with the above.

The following is the form of invitation to the reception :

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER

AT HOME,

*Tuesday morning, September tenth,
from half-past eleven until four o'clock.*

59 West Lombard Street.

The admission-card is narrow and long, and bears the following formula, neatly and plainly engraved in script :

ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL.

Ceremony at eleven o'clock.

The order of the religious part of the marriage-ceremony is fixed by the church in which it occurs; but there are pleasant picturesque effects, and agreeable and significant surprises that may be added to the old-fashioned, staid regulations. These added attractions establish in the minds of those present a distinct remembrance of an event that should always remain a pleasant memory. Refined taste and a careful arrangement and understanding of the details

of these things are a decided necessity, and of course rehearsals are required.

The customs of a community change so gradually that one is scarce conscious of a difference in its social forms until a transformation is wholly completed. During many years it was an American usage for bridegrooms to select a retinue of young gentlemen who should equal in number the maids who attended the bride. These friends served as cavaliers for the waiting maidens, and also as somber backgrounds for the toilets of fairer creatures than themselves. Besides the eagerness which is expressed by our social leaders to follow British examples whenever it be possible in a republic—perhaps only to prove to them that we have forgotten that it was once the fervent desire of England to direct us in these very matters along with others of more vital importance—there are several serious reasons why the groom should now invite but one gentleman to attend him during this important observance.

These reasons, less romantic than practical, will suggest themselves to marrying maids and men, without our mentioning them in this chap-

ter. Accordingly, the bridegroom of to-day simplifies his individual part in the marriage pageant by choosing a single friend, whom he calls his "best man," to attend upon him during this serious transition. This is an English title, and also an English custom, which is altogether sensible and convenient. The "best man" arranges the business and social formalities of the wedding, thereby leaving the husband-elect to enjoy or to endure all the tranquillities that are possible to him during the celebration of his marriage. From among the ushers, all of whom are selected by the bride, one is chosen to be master of the ceremonies. He is early at the church, because the spectacle of an awning and carpet is certain to attract the idle, who are always eager to look upon a pretty spectacle of any kind, and especially upon a wedding.

Having been made acquainted with the number of guests expected to be present at the church, he calculates the space they will occupy and places the ribbon or the arch of flowers across the aisle far enough back from the altar to give them ample room, remembering that a lady in full toilet does not feel too amiable when

she is crushed into narrow spaces. He sees that the organist is present, and that his programme of compositions is properly arranged. The kneeling-stool, which should be covered with white, should also be looked at and properly adjusted, and then all the ushers take their places, to be in readiness to escort ladies to their proper seats. The usher offers a lady his right arm, and if unacquainted with her, inquires if she be a friend of the bride or groom. If of the bride, he places her in a seat upon the left, and, if of the groom, upon the right side of the main aisle. If the lady guest be attended by a gentleman he follows her to her seat. Ushers are usually acquainted with the two families, and understand where to place the nearer and where the remoter kinspeople of the bridal party. This arrangement disposes the father or guardian of the bride at the proper place during and after the ceremony.

When the bride and her attendants have arrived and arranged themselves in the vestibule, the groom and "best man" come forth from the vestry and wait at the altar, the organ meantime playing softly some melody that was chosen by

the bride. Usually the ushers walk in pairs in advance of the ladies, and arrange themselves at the right of the two awaiting gentlemen, whose faces are turned toward the advancing bride.

Sometimes the bridesmaids precede and sometimes they follow the bride, and always stand at her left side. These arrangements of precedence, or the contrary, are permitted to be matters of individual preference. If the maids precede her, two or four little boys, costumed as pages, may follow her to bear her train, or perhaps to carry baskets of flowers, which they scatter in her path as she leaves the church. To do this they must precede her when going out. If the maids follow the bride, sometimes she is preceded by two or four little girls, who strew her path to the altar with blossoms.

The bride, in white, is ornamented with natural flowers, which may be of any variety that charms her, the orange-blossom being no longer a requisite of the ceremony. She is veiled, and leans upon the arm of whoever is nearest by kin or affiliation to her, and who is to give her away.

The bridesmaids dress in delicate colors, wear

no train, and the fabrics of their costumes are far less grand than the one which robes the bride. It is considered in bad form for the bridesmaids to array themselves otherwise than simply, but prettily and becomingly. Hats that are picturesque and perhaps historic in style, or bonnets with short white tulle veils, are worn by them. They carry baskets or fans of flowers, and these may be of as diverse tints as their complexions will permit, but the fashioning of their dresses is limited by the styles of one period, if not historic.

It is not uncommon at present for the ladies of bridal parties to copy a notable picture by their garments and coiffures, and the effect is usually charming. The ceremony would be greatly beautified in such instances if the gentlemen would also copy the same picture by their own vestments.

If the wedding is by day, the gentlemen wear a morning dress, which consists of dark coat and vest, and light trousers, with a white necktie. The groom may wear light but not white gloves, or he may be gloveless if he chooses to take advantage of late English examples in high life. If

the ceremony takes place in the evening, full dress is demanded of him, and, of course, of all the gentlemen.

The bride often carries a prayer-book, which is sumptuously bound, and is usually a gift from a dear friend ; also a boquet or fan of lilies-of-the-valley, white carnations, or other blossoms that are delicate and suggestive of a sentiment suited to the occasion.

The ring is a customary part of the marriage service, few churches rejecting this symbol, which is so significant of an unending compact. In the older countries, and especially among the Germans, a plain gold ring with date and inscription is given to the woman as a sign of betrothal, and the same ring is again used at the marriage ceremony, after which a jeweled ring is added to guard that more precious one which was used as a seal, and is to be worn always as a sign of confirmation to earlier but equally solemn promises.

This is a poetic and beautiful formality, that is likely to become a general custom. The size of the diamond of betrothal having been too often accepted as a measurement of the bride-

groom's fortune, it is ceasing to be an agreeable symbol to young ladies of refined fiber and delicate sentiments. Those who still cling to the custom of placing a jewel upon the hand of a *fiancée* are extremely careful to choose a flawless diamond, no matter how small it may be. There is a haunting superstition about the perfection of this symbol that is not without its uses. It is at least an evidence of the giver's sincerities.

The bride and groom kneel a moment in silent devotion, while the organ repeats its beautiful inarticulations. They rise, the ceremony proceeds, and after the clerical blessing the clergyman congratulates the husband and wife, but he does not kiss the lady, as was once the custom. Indeed, kissing in public is no longer permissible in good society, and a reserved and refined womanhood has been long in rebellion against this usage without having abolished it until quite recently. This public may be her own invited and welcomed guests, but all the same she objects to being kissed in their presence, and very properly. Indeed, few brides are willing to have their veils raised and thrown

backward until they have left the church. This, also, is in excellent taste.

Two of the ushers usually hurry from the vestibule to the residence of the bride, to be in readiness to receive the newly-wedded.

The bridal party, with half the maids at the right of the lady and half at the left of the groom, take their position for the usual congratulations. The parents of the bride stand at a little distance at her right and those of the groom at his left, unless they receive in another room.

As the guests arrive, the ushers are ready to offer their right arms to the ladies to conduct them to the married pair. The gentlemen attendants of the ladies follow. If the usher is not acquainted with the lady he is escorting, he asks her name on the way. He presents her and her attendant to the bride and groom, and then takes them to the parents of the wedded pair and introduces them.

Two families who are frequently strangers to each other make this formality both necessary and agreeable. If ladies are present without gentlemen, and the reception be large, an usher

attends each lady to the breakfast-room, and sees that she is properly served. If the company be small and the entertainment be a breakfast-table, with chairs and cards of location, an escort is provided for each one of the ladies in the same manner as at any other breakfast of ceremony.

The host sits at one end of the table and the hostess at the other, he with the bride at his right, she with the groom at hers, when a wedding breakfast is arranged in this charming but limited fashion.

After the breakfast, or in case of a reception, before the guests disperse, the bride and groom retire to their dressing-rooms quietly, taking no leave of any one, and prepare for their departure.

They don their traveling attire and only a few favored or especially invited friends remain with the bridemaids and ushers to throw rice and worn slippers after their carriage. The "best man" has already gone to the train or steamer to look after their luggage, and to see them off without vexation or care-taking.

No one asks them whither they are flitting, such a question being considered in bad taste.

The "best man" only is aware of the direction in which their honeymoon is rising, and he is not likely to speak of his knowledge.


Bridal gifts are seldom exhibited, and the few friends who are permitted to look at them examine them only after their cards are removed, so that a token of love may not be suspected of ostentation nor one of display have its real motives recognized to dishonor the gifts of sincere affection.

The present of usefulness may be sent only by those who have a right to comprehend the needs of the newly-wedded. All friends, who are "a little less than kin and a little more than kind," may contribute such objects of art and beauty, of literature or of antiquity, as shall be an acknowledgment and compliment to the cultivation and refined tastes of the bride and groom, but useful articles, such as silver, furniture, and money, may not be given by those who are outside of the family circle. Indeed, there is, happily, less universality in the wedding gift than formerly. It has fallen into disrepute, and by not a few families it is considered an intrusion,

if not an impertinence; unfortunately, it can not be guarded against by advertisement, as is the once universal and unpleasant floral bouquet at funerals.

Those gifts which are sent to the bride, such as linen, silver, etc., are marked, if inscribed at all, with her maiden name; those for the groom with his cipher or initial. The bride acknowledges by note within a month, with her own hand, every gift which she receives. Sometimes she carries or is followed on her wedding-tour by a list of her presents, so that she may return thanks as early as practicable.

It is proper to mention that the groom generally presents some *souvenir* of the occasion to each of the bridesmaids and ushers, and ingenuity struggles to devise simple and enduring novelties for these occasions. Fans, rings, bangles, and miniatures, prayer-books and lamps, have served when nothing else could be thought of, and canes and scarf-pins, sleeve-buttons and spurs, are among the objects bestowed to remind the receivers of their opportune services. The bouquets of the maids and the *boutonnieres* of the



ushers are the gift of the bride. If she desires an unusual fashion or fabric for the bridesmaids' toilet, she provides these also.

If the wedded pair commence life in a house of their own, it is customary to issue "At home" cards for a few mornings or evenings at no distant date, unless the marriage occurs in early summer, when these informal receptions are delayed until autumn. Only such persons are invited as the young people choose to keep as friends, or perhaps only those whom they can afford to retain. It is an easy and sensible opportunity for carefully rearranging one's social list, because there are limitations to hospitality which are frequently more necessary than agreeable. This list of old friends and acquaintances can not be too seriously considered and sifted, and no moment is so favorable as at the beginning of housekeeping. This custom of arranging a fresh list is admitted as a social necessity, and nobody is offended. The omission of reception-cards is taken as a communicative and intelligent silence, which may cause regret, but it can not give offense. It only declares that by marriage the

new household has doubled the number of its kinspeople and friends by uniting two families. That is all. These reception-cards are neither large nor small, but fine in quality. A note may be used if preferred; but the card is less ostentatious and more convenient. The following is the accepted style :

MR. AND MRS. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON,

AT HOME,

*Tuesday evenings in September,
from half-past eight until eleven o'clock.*

39 Bradford Street.

An elaborate table on these occasions is not considered in refined taste. The bride wears a reception toilet, and the groom is in full evening dress. This form of card is also used if the marriage has been very quiet.

In cases where the wedding has been private or informal, during the absence of the pair on their wedding-journey, the bride's family sometimes issue an announcement of the marriage to all their friends and acquaintances. This card or note implies that the marriage was fully

sanctioned by the parents, and it dignifies the ceremony in the estimation of its recipients.

These notes are engraved, and in many instances they are prepared for distant friends who could not be present even at a grand wedding. Distance may make an invitation an absurdity. The form of this announcement is usually as follows, and it is sent in two envelopes, by post :

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER
announce the marriage of their daughter,
MISS MATILDE ALICE,

to

MR. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON,
Tuesday, October tenth, 1878.

No. 59 Lombard Street, New York.

A note of congratulation is usually sent to the parents of the bride, and also to the bridal pair if the intimacy of the parties warrants it.

If there has been no wedding reception, and a reception follows the return of the couple to town, even though the young people take possession of their own house, the mother of the

bride usually gives one to them first. She sends out notes or large cards, engraved in the following manner :

MRS. HOWARD MORTIMER.

MRS. ALEXIS STAFFORD CARLTON.

AT HOME,

*Tuesday, December ninth,
from three until ten o'clock.*

59 West Lombard Street.

If a reception be given only in the evening, the invitation will be issued in the names of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mortimer, and a separate card will bear the names of Mr. and Mrs. Alexis Stafford Carlton. One envelope encloses both cards.

It is permissible in cases where a marriage takes place during seasons of family mourning, or of a misfortune, to issue cards simply bearing the names of the married party, with new address, and another card enclosed, upon which is engraved the maiden name of the bride.

The entry of the bridal party to the church may be varied to suit the taste, but care should

be taken to avoid dramatic effects while endeavoring to be picturesque and impressive. If the formality described in this chapter be followed, the parties adopting it will be certain to find precedents for their style among the highest social circles of New York. But there are timid brides, who prefer to adhere strictly to the fashion of their grandmothers, and gain content in the imitation of a long line of worthy examples. In such cases the bridesmaids first pass up the aisle, each with a gentleman on whom to lean; they turn at the altar, the ladies going to their left and the gentlemen to their right, and the groom follows, bearing his destined mother-in-law on his arm. This lady he seats, as speedily as politeness permits, in a convenient front pew at his left. The bride follows, clinging to the arm of her father; or, if she be orphaned, her next-of-kin supports her on her way to her expectant groom. At her left, and just a step or two back of her, her father waits until asked to give her away, which he does by taking her right hand and placing it in that of the clergyman. After this brief but important formality,

he joins the lady who entered with the groom and becomes her escort. The father and mother pass out of the church just behind the bridal company.

Among the bright and pleasant variations to the solemn pomp of a church wedding which etiquette heartily approves, although it does not prescribe it, is the strewing of flowers in the path of the young couple as they go away from the altar. Little girls, costumed in white raiment, with baskets of blossoms, rise up, like unsuspected fairies, while the clergyman is congratulating the bride, and slowly drop roses down the aisle to the carriage. Sometimes garlands of flowers, that have been somewhere hidden, are suddenly seen stretched across the aisle at brief intervals, by little maidens who stand on the seats at the ends of the pews, and lift their pretty arms high in air to swing their roses over the pathway of the bridal party.

Sometimes, instead of garlands, they toss rose-leaves in crimson, gold, and white from the same high positions, all over the outgoing procession. Many other devices, fanciful and

charming, may be added to the brief brightness of the moment.

Weddings at home vary but little from those at church. Sometimes the ceremony is performed in the presence of the family, and perhaps also a very few intimate friends, after which there is a reception. The music, the descent of the bridal party, and their entry into the room, and approach to a selected place and position, are just the same as if they were in church. An altar of flowers and a place for kneeling can be easily arranged at home. The space behind the altar need be no wider than is required for the clergyman.

When the marriage ceremony is concluded, the party turn in their places, and face their friends, who wait to congratulate them, the nearest and dearest first in the order of their kinships. If space be of importance, the kneeling-stool, and even the floral altar, may be removed a little later, without observation. The latter, however, is usually pushed back against the wall, and adds to the decorative part of the festivity.

Calls or card-leaving, by all the guests, upon the family of the bride, is a rigorous formality within ten days after the wedding.

The marriage ceremonies of a widow differ only in the not wearing of a veil and the orange-blossoms. She may be costumed in white, and have her maids at the altar, if she pleases. This liberty has been given to her only within a few years, and refined taste will determine her in these matters. On her wedding-cards of invitation her maiden name is used as a part of her proper name; this is but respect to her parents. Having dropped the initials of her deceased husband when she lays aside her crapes, she uses her own Christian name. If she have sons, or unmarried daughters, at the time she becomes again a wife, she prefixes the last name of her children to her new one, on all ceremonious occasions in which they are interested in common with herself. This respect is really due to them, and etiquette permits, although our social usages do not imperatively command, its adoption.

Of course, the formalities which follow the marriage of a widow can seldom be managed

in the same manner as those of a younger bride. Circumstances must control the entertainments which follow the marriage of a widow, and no fixed forms can be arranged for them. A quiet taste and refined sentiments are the best regulators of these civilities.

XV.

CHRISTENINGS AND BIRTHDAYS.

ONCE upon a time the naming of the heir was considered the most important of all family celebrations until the day arrived when this young gentleman attained his majority. The daughter, not being entitled to much consideration in those days, seldom received her christening with public ostentation, and there were few expressions of delightful hope upon such occasions which were worth recording in history.

The dissenting churches, however, succeeded in reorganizing the forms of christenings among themselves, and their sentiments and usages eventually modified the ceremonies that were habitual to the established creed.

They transformed the old christening customs from a secular high festival of feasting and merriment to a profoundly religious formality, in which austerity was its most noticeable feature.

They selected this occasion, of providing names both for sons and daughters, as a fitting time for solemnly dedicating the futures of their offspring to the services of their own faith. This religious ceremony of naming the child, and at the same time consecrating it to a fixed form of faith, has been greatly and sensibly varied within the last quarter of a century among almost all our people.

The religious portion of this ceremony, in its extreme or severe services, has been pleasantly formulated so that participators in the celebration of christening may feel glad at the same time that they are reverential and grateful. Indeed, there is as wide a difference between the present sentiments and convictions which direct this ordinance of christening our children as there is between the former and the present methods of spending the first day of the week.

Our Puritan fathers and mothers beautified none of their religious customs ; but their descendants have drifted, little by little, away from under the shadow of religious severities, and we have not only ordained for ourselves less rigid

usages, but we have acquired sweeter sentiments, tenderer and nobler estimates of duty, and more ennobling customs for christening the little folk, who can not fetch their names into this world along with them.

These latter-day celebrations include or combine such social and religious forms as can not, in the slightest degree, dull our perceptions of the highest duty which we owe to the little shapeless white soul that has come to us for guidance and development. Nor has the charm of a beautified religious custom lowered our standard of Christian conduct.

Almost all the old barbarities and inhumanities of worship are rapidly fading out of the world, even among the pagans. Indeed, it is said that there is less of that grosser servitude which long custom has failed to make satisfying to the most ignorant of people, and abhorrent practices are becoming absolute, even in heathen lands.

Somebody who is both wise and good lately said that the "Gates of Prosperity" were the widest of all the entrances to heaven, as has

been proved by the records of Christian characters, and that the sweeter and more beautiful the social observances of a religion, the more profoundly devout was the believing household. Indeed, it would be difficult at present to establish a general belief that the consecration of a little child to a noble life was less sincere because the vow of watchful obligation was made in the presence of many friends, where flowers bloomed, aromas made the air deliciously sweet, and harmonious music drifted through the thoughts of the child's parents and sponsors during the sacred hour of consecration. Indeed, such fair surroundings enrich the moment with an abiding benediction. They possess a power of following one with a white wake of hallowed memories that compel us to keep our promised watch over the child.

That the christening ceremonials among our superior citizens are becoming more and more beautiful each year in New York, even our sourest ascetics admit with scarcely a word of disapproval.

The formality which is most in favor is the

giving of a reception; the hours are fixed from three or four o'clock until six P. M. It is equally proper to write the invitations, or to order them engraved in script.

The engraved form is scarcely varied from the following :

MR. AND MRS. JAMES ALDRICH
*request the honor of your presence at the
christening of their son [or daughter]
at five o'clock, Thursday, January tenth.
Reception from four to six.*

No. 101 St. James Street.

This card receives an early response. The only difference between a written and an engraved note is in a less formal distribution of the language upon the note or card when the pen is used.

Flowers ornament the house tastefully and possibly elaborately. This decoration is subject to the season, and the ability to secure these pretty symbols of purity and sweetness. The guests all arrive in reception or visiting toilets, before five o'clock, and meet the host and hostess just as they would at any reception.

Sometimes there is a band of music, but often-
er there are a pianist and a quartette of singers,
the musicians, more than likely, being selected
from among the friends or kinspeople of the
child. Sometimes professional musicians are
employed. There is a temporary font arranged
in a prominent position in the room. A small
round table or pedestal is chosen, and upon its
center is placed a silver goblet or bowl, or one
of glass. The edge of the pedestal is often hung
with vines suspended from its outer edge, so that
the support of the baptismal vessel is hidden
entirely. Smilax is beautiful and convenient
for a deep fringe to a table. The top of this
pedestal or table is built up to the rim of the
bowl with white flowers, the lower row often
being calla lilies laid with their points turned
outward and downward, and other blossoms and
foliage are arranged above them until the rim of
the vessel is overlapped with bloom. Above this
is sometimes suspended, by a thread, a white
dove, with its wings outspread. This dove can
be procured of a taxidermist or of a florist. If
it is made of wire and fine white blossoms it is

pretty, but the real dove is much more effective and beautiful.

At five o'clock the child is brought to the parents, who stand by the font, and the sponsors join them. If it be a girl, its selected guardians are usually two young ladies, who are dressed in white, and who arrange themselves one at each side of the father and mother, and a hymn or chant is sung. The clergyman goes through the rite of christening, according to the formalities of his own established church ; more music follows, and then a benediction. Directly after this, congratulations are offered to the father and mother, and the child is admired and petted, or it is removed to its own apartment, according to its desire or its aversion to society. Refreshments are offered as at any afternoon entertainment, and they are usually of a richer quality than are provided at an informal reception. Of course this pleasant custom is varied according to the poetic or artistic fancies of the household, but it is always beautiful and cheerful, and yet it is a sincere consecration.

The birthdays of children are being cele-

brated in New York more and more after the customs of Europeans. These waymarks in the lives of children are made pleasant remembrances to them. A little feast is made for the child, to which its playmates are invited, but the invitations seldom extend beyond a number that may be seated at table, where they are not overshadowed by larger eaters.

The feast is dainty and plentiful, but not hurtfully rich, and its especial characteristic is a cake in which are imbedded as many fancy wax-candles as are the years of the young person in whose honor the party is given. These candles are placed in little tin tubes and sunken near the outer edge of the cake, or they may be placed in a rim which is arranged about it. They are already lighted when the young people are invited into the banqueting apartment.

After the food is eaten, the one who is celebrating a birthday cuts the cake, if he or she is old and strong enough for such pleasant duty, and a piece of it is given to each guest. Plays or dances follow the supper. Guests are not expected to make presents. Indeed, with the

exception of a book, or a bunch of flowers, contributions would give pain rather than pleasure to the mother of the little host or hostess.

These little celebrations continue annually until the child is old enough to enter society. Even if the family be in mourning, a birthday is not forgotten, although the festival may be less gay than usual.

Among the elders of a household this annual return of the birthday is seldom celebrated in the presence of any persons except his or her own kinspeople. The twenty-first birthday of a gentleman is often made an occasion for extending hospitalities in the form of a dinner, a party, or a ball, but a lady's age is not thus publicly noticed, for obvious but absurd social reasons. After the lady or gentleman becomes astonishingly old, and they feel proud of their longevity, the most beautiful attentions are often bestowed upon them by their young friends, and also by those who were the companions of their youth. Flowers, letters of congratulation, cards of inquiry and respect, gifts that will interest, breakfast or dinner parties, and receptions, are con-

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sidered in "good form," as the English express an act which is properly performed.

There are few vigorous people who care to emphasize the fact that they are passing still another annual milestone, until they have really reached and entered upon the late afternoon of life, and are feeling the sweet twilight of calm falling like a blessing upon them. It is this earlier unwillingness to watch and count the years as they go by that has led to the giving up of birthday celebrations in the presence of one's acquaintances during that active interval which comes in between youth and old age.

Even a remembrance of this anniversary in one's own household is oftenest recalled only by "a gift without words," rather than by a spoken congratulation.

XVI.

MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARIES.

A NOTICEABLE entertainment upon each annual return of marriage days is a custom in but few of our best families. In the limited circle of the fireside, however, the day is usually marked by expressions of good-will, and the bestowal of gifts between husband and wife, and also from children and their parents ; but this is all.

After the passing of a certain number of years, which are marked off into epochs by several distinguishing but fanciful names, many of our households celebrate the anniversaries of their marriage by extended hospitalities. Of course, elderly people feel and manifest their joy by graver or more dignified formalities in their entertainments than is expected of younger husbands and wives, the latter often providing merriment of a fanciful kind. Not that any of

these anniversaries are emphasized in our higher circles "upon the contribution plan," as a cynical writer upon our social customs has most aptly styled that sort of hospitality which intimates by the form of its invitations that presents are expected. To offer a *souvenir* to a bride is a pleasant method of expressing to her our good wishes, but to contribute to the sustainment of her after house-furnishing is quite another affair. As a custom, begging is unknown to the superior entertainers of New York.

The marriage anniversary which falls after five years is sometimes called "a wooden wedding;" after ten years, it is mentioned as "tin;" after twenty, it is "crystal;" at twenty-five, it is "silver;" at fifty, it is a "golden anniversary;" and at sixty, the "diamond wedding" occurs.

Those who have lived together in contented wedlock twenty-five years are usually glad enough to express their happiness in some emphatic manner, and also to beg the recognition of this event by their friends and acquaintances.

Our most self-respecting households who desire to celebrate a return of their wedding-day

are compelled, through their delicacy of feeling, to relinquish a general gala entertainment, or else to make an announcement upon their cards of invitation of their private sentiments in the matter of a miscellaneous gift-making. Just now we are passing through an unpleasant social transition, and we hope soon to have attained a higher civilization in this particular; these apparently compulsory contributions upon certain occasions, either glad or sorrowful, will have fallen into disuse.

It is no more agreeable to the entertainer to be compelled, in self-defense, to direct that "no gifts received" be engraved upon cards of invitation to a party than it is to add R. s. v. p., which four consonants unpleasantly suggest that there may be a lack of familiarity with polite usages on the part of those who are bidden to an entertainment. Without doubt we shall soon pass the "donation period" in our social customs, and a gift will become what it really should be, significant of something superior to a meaningless habit.

Of course, very near kinspeople and very

dear old friends will take the liberty sometimes of disregarding the engraved injunction, just as such valued individuals indulge themselves in familiarities with the rules that usually govern one's private social affairs. But if remoter relatives or mere society acquaintances send a gift other than flowers or a book, after being requested to restrict their generosity, they need not be surprised if the act be considered an impertinence, and resented accordingly. The value of a gift has come to be measured, by persons of delicacy, by the motive which prompted its bestowal, and there is a decidedly serious effort being made by our refined and influential leaders of society to escape from an unpleasantness that may be suffered equally by the giver and the receiver of formal presents.

People of superior breeding regard anniversary contributions to their household effects with distress, if not with aversion, and such gifts, if not presented by those who possess a natural right to make such bestowals, are likely to be returned to their donors.

When this custom of self-respecting inde-

pendence of material favors is fully established in our higher circles, society will be pitched at least an octave above its late key-note. Indeed, there are not a few married people who refrain from asking their friends and acquaintances to participate in their rejoicing upon anniversary days, through fear of being considered willing to receive gifts from those whom they desire only to be merry with. Doubtless it is for this reason that fashion has frowned upon the grotesquerie of cards of wood, tin, etc., which were popular only a few years since as notifications to a guest of the occasion which suggested a festivity.

The prevailing style of cards of invitation to an anniversary party or reception is just the same as to any ordinary entertainment. A wedding-bell, or a horseshoe of white flowers, with the date of the marriage wrought into it with colored blossoms, or a bride's loaf dated by confessions, and placed upon a separate table of honor, informs the guests of the reason for rejoicing, after their arrival, when congratulations follow as a matter of course.

When a quarter of a century of married life is

to be celebrated, it is customary to mention the fact upon the cards, and the much-needed information, *no gifts received*, is placed in the left-hand lower corner. The formula of the invitation is in the following style, clearly engraved in script :

MR. AND MRS. JOHN WINTHROP,
on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their marriage,
Monday evening, January ninth,
at half-past eight o'clock.
22 Adams Street.

No gifts received.

In responding to this invitation, either to accept or decline the hospitable civility, courteous congratulations are added in any graceful style which an acquaintance with the givers of the entertainment may suggest. A too familiar and overcordial note of response is almost as offensive as one which expresses no interest at all in those who have been wedded companions through so many years. There is a happy medium to the formalities of even kindly wishes. It is not unnatural to suspect an ac-

quaintance of insincerity when excesses of language are used in society matters.

When such an impressive anniversary has arrived, it is customary for the host and hostess to secure as many guests as possible from among those who were present at their wedding. The clergyman who performed the ceremony is bidden, and, if possible, the wedding-garments are again worn upon the occasion. The clergyman returns thanks for the prolonged life of the pair, and such other interesting formalities are added as will make the occasion impressive, without being oppressive.

After the clergyman has completed his part of the ceremony (provided his presence has been secured), the near kinspeople offer congratulations first, when other guests follow after the manner of a wedding reception. When a formal supper is provided, the host and hostess lead together upon this peculiar occasion, and the guests follow in convenient order, as at an ordinary party.

If the supper be arranged in *buffet* style, the bride and groom retain their positions during

the entire evening, except there be dancing, when they frequently lead the first set, which is usually a cotillon upon such anniversaries. The guests seek the *buffet* or table for refreshments whenever it suits their pleasure, and take leave before midnight, after having expressed parting wishes for many more years of health and gladness to their entertainers. After-calls of formality are expected as a matter of course.

There are many beautiful and suggestive decorations possible upon such an occasion. Sometimes all the floral ornaments in the house are fully-blossoming roses and ivy, or rich foliage and no bloom. Among the loveliest and most suggestive of house decorations for a golden wedding anniversary are groups of palms and gracefully drooping heads of wheat, tied up in small sheaves. Garlands of laurel and autumnal foliage are also both charming and pleasantly prophetic of the afternoon of a happy life.

XVII.

COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS.

THE best usages for dress in New York are being adopted throughout our Republic by all refined persons. "The knowing and unknowing garments of society" may be sneered at by persons who are too indolent to make toilets, but all the same, dress tells its own story, and no one can escape its effects.

At weddings, luncheons, receptions of all kinds, matinées, visits of ceremony, and, indeed, to anything that occurs in the day-time, a gentleman must wear a morning costume, no matter how grand the toilets of the ladies. Fashion and etiquette demand it. A dark or black frock-coat with vest of the same, and lighter trousers, cut according to prevailing style, are in the best form for all daylight social affairs. In the country, Knickerbockers are fashionable day suits, and a gentleman, if he rides or walks,

may pay visits to familiar acquaintances in such attire, but if he drives, or is visiting elderly persons, or strangers, this dress is too unceremonious. A rigorous etiquette in dress is sometimes burdensome, but then to certain temperaments civilization in general is a bore.

Indeed, among the conspiring causes which make the enjoyment of an opera too infrequent is costume. If a lady wears a full toilet, she must ride in a carriage. If she goes in visiting dress, she can not properly occupy a box, even if one be placed at her disposal, because she would appear like an ugly weed in a gay garden of brilliant blossoms. For the same reason she can not properly make calls in the boxes during the intervals of music, if she is soberly clad, and the same applies in part to the gentleman who is in *matinée* toilet.

The new etiquette regarding costume at places of public amusement began only lately to shape itself into a formality in New York. It is now considered quite proper for a gentleman to attend an opera in a *matinée* suit, provided seats have been taken elsewhere than in a box,

but he is limited in his visits between the acts to such of his acquaintances as are also in demi-toilet, unless he goes to the *foyer* to chat with promenaders. The latter pleasure has long been one of the agreeable parts of the entertainment in Europe, and the custom of going out with ladies between the acts is rapidly coming into vogue in this country.

If a gentleman is in full dress, he may visit everywhere in the house, but he will not seat himself in the orchestra or in the dress circle, because his toilet will appear out of harmony with the soberer garments about him. He may properly wear gloves when he is not in evening dress, as this light formality of attire is in keeping with the style of his costume. If he wears a dress coat and an evening necktie, it is permissible for him to appear without gloves. This fashion of uncovered hands originated among English royalty, and it finds favor with many of the leaders of American society.

If a lady is invited by a gentleman to attend the opera, it is proper for him to inquire if she prefers to occupy a box, or at least to

state to her what place he proposes to offer her. If she accepts a seat in a box, it is *de rigueur* that she go unbonneted, and at least that she wear a light opera cloak, even if she does not array herself in full evening dress. If she is to be seated elsewhere, she should always wear a bonnet, which may be as gay and pretty as she pleases. It is not considered a breach of etiquette for a gentleman to escort ladies to the opera by any one of the public conveyances, provided street toilets are worn, and a lady of delicacy or considerateness, when she accepts the invitation, will mention her desire to go in this unostentatious manner, should circumstances make it proper.

A very pretty New York girl—and her prettiness should pardon her lack of musical appreciation—declared that, if she could choose, she would far rather attend the opera but just one night in a season, and be beautifully dressed, go there in a carriage with two liveried men mounted upon its front, and sit in a prominent box, than to be present every night plainly attired and sit in the orchestra, provided even that

a choir of angels were to sing to her. The providing of costly apparel is the largest expense and the heaviest weariness for a lady whose fondness for good music is really profound and sincere, and there are not a few among Fortune's favorites who prefer the refined and unostentatious quiet of the less dressy parts of the house, just because their preparations for the evening are thus made so much less tiresome and distracting. A lady can go directly from her own dinner-table, bonneted, wrapped, and gloved, and ready to luxuriate in the blisses of harmonious sounds, unwearied by the *coiffeur*, painfully pretty *chaussure*, and other unmentionable etceteras of a grand toilet, which always require a patient endurance of care while she is being arrayed, and an equally distracting anxiety to maintain its elegance. If "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," it would require a larger mind than woman is accused of possessing to retain an unruffled and unstained magnificence, and listen to all the ravishing notes of the last *prima donna* and the rich tones of the heavenly baritone at the same time. This is not written

as an apology for plain attire. Not at all. It is simply an announcement of the customs of dress which are being molded and completed by use and by public approval. No individual who loves color, warmth, and beauty, but feels all the more grateful to those who add their charms of gorgeousness in silks, laces, velvets, and jewels, to the opera, because they themselves have been excused by circumstances from feeling compelled to lend their own persons and possessions to intensify this magnificence.

. An evening bonnet and light gloves are considered by our best society as the height of dressing for a public theatre or a concert, unless there is some prearranged understanding that a wandering star in the musical or dramatic firmament is to be especially honored, and that a fine toilet is to be one of the methods of expressing respectful admiration.

Gentlemen need never wear full dress unless the ladies do; albeit, when no lady is expected to be in grand costume, a gentleman may select whichever style of garment he pleases. The delicate sentiment which would deter him from

going in full dress to the opera when the ladies whom he accompanies are not so attired need not be considered at a concert where one lady is presumably as well costumed as another. There are many ways by which a tasteful lady will brighten a sober garb without exhausting her purse or worrying her mind and hands. She will do this in grateful appreciation of the lately approved custom of going to the opera and to the concert-room, and even into a proscenium box at a theatre, in a pretty visiting-dress. She can afford to enjoy the theatre, good music, and the opera many more times during the winter on this account; and the gentleman who does not feel compelled to escort a lady in a carriage can indulge in these luxuries twice or three times as often because of this lately established etiquette in matters of dress.

XVIII.

EXTENDED VISITS.

WE are becoming a hospitable people in a larger social sense, year by year. We have, as a nation, always shared our good things and proffered our roofs to both friends and strangers with an Arabic conscientiousness, and a sense of the sacredness of breaking bread with the needy, but it is only within a few years that any considerable numbers of our people have become rich enough to follow the generous customs of English hosts. Even now we are more likely to fill our town than our country houses with guests, while the Briton only enjoys gathering his friends about him at his secluded estate. However, when New Yorkers do extend hospitalities, their invitations are formulated quite after the English fashion, and their prompt acceptances or refusals are similar, because they involve both hosts and guests in the same obliga-

tions. It would be in bad form if guests did not express appreciation of every effort to entertain them, and it is equally in good taste on the part of the host and hostess to contribute comfort and amusement both in and out of the house. The latter should entertain but not persecute their visitors. Ideal are they who permit their guests a little leisure and as much tranquillity as they desire. To bring strangers into a happy and sunny atmosphere of cordiality and freedom is the best and the finest of all hospitalities. The highest breeding does not insist upon anything. Amusements and outings may be proffered, but they should never be urged. A fine flexibility for every social programme should be felt by both entertained and entertainer, with the sole exception of that for arriving and departing. The first is a fixed and immovable hour. The latter may be abbreviated, if for good reason, but there are few occasions, and these should have most excellent reasons in them for prolonging a stay beyond the time mentioned in the invitation.

To fix rules for the methods by which visits

are to be made charming would doubtless prove as disagreeable as really impossible while circumstances and fortunes differ.

There are persons even in good society, and who are surrounded by affluence, who never recognize the obligations which should compel them to entertain. Indeed, the plains of mediocrity are fertile in the production of individuals who never do anything for which they have not an unquestionable and easily recognizable precedent, but who, through indolence or a selfish unwillingness to sacrifice their own wishes for the sake of their guests, make social intercourse in their households a burden instead of a pleasure to their visitors. Of this class the number is so great that society does not know just what to do with them.

To be a charming hostess requires all the best qualities of the legendary angel, combined with the fascinating wisdom of the arch-enemy. A morbid devotion to truthfulness in word, deed, and countenance is impossible to the cordial or even the courteous hostess. She is compelled by the sacredness of her position "to smile though

china fall," which virtuous attainment, by the way, is the result not only of an intense longing but of confidently expecting to be an angel. Especially is this true of the prevailing devotee to that fragile god, Keramos.

We have been directed to turn the other cheek for a blow, when one of them has been spitefully smitten, and it is fortunate for some of us that this command did not read, "If one *tasse* be ruthlessly crushed by the reckless fiends of the china-closet, demand that the *théière* be broken also." One would mend itself in the event of its being cruelly treated, but the other one, *hélas!*

The indifferent housekeeper can never become the perfect hostess because, lightly as we may hold the material comforts of life, when we weigh them against the nobler quality of being loyal to all the virtues of heart, soul, and intellect, the smooth, noiseless running of the domestic machinery really does carry the guest from his welcome to his adieus as if "flowery beds of roses" were the couches which had upheld and rested him. The grinding which is

felt by the jerky march of irregular hours, incapable services, and food prepared in an inferior manner would wrench from the most tenacious memory the charm of a cordial welcome given by the sweetest of souls. There are women who really possess the trained capability of ruling their homes with the perfection of intelligent authority, and yet who throw down the scepter because their less accomplished acquaintances are unable to wield one of similar power. They intend to wear their virtues and acquirements lightly in order not to be too hard on their less competent sisters; this, at least, is the indirect and mischievous but most amiable confession which their household negligence implies.

Besides the regular domestic drilling, which can only be performed by the highest officer, an *esprit de corps* should be infused into the family troop, and then kept up by an unflagging and unflinching discipline. This formality of expression, doubtless, appears to be severe, but its sentiment, when put into practice, is the very kindest. The most rigid of military disciplinarians have always been the most beloved

and revered the world over, as history clearly proves, and the strictest of commanders and regulators in domestic services secure the most devotedly attached and permanent employees.

As a rule, the lady who has inherited large establishments and large fortunes through several succeeding generations is the finest of housekeeper, and the most capable of disciplinarians in the management of her own home. The housekeeper who supposes that to be indifferent about excesses in expenditures is a proof of refined elegance and superior breeding, is altogether mistaken. She never convinces any one that her ancestry as well as herself have been rich so long that familiarity with fortune has bred contempt. If she has fostered such an idea, it is just as well to relinquish it at once, because she is woefully mistaken in her opinion. To be ostentatious is a positive proof of vulgarity, and foolish lavishness stands as an undoubted witness to the fact that an abundant possession is a recent acquirement. Only those who have been made intimate with good fortune through a

prolonged familiarity, or by a supernatural development of good sense, are capable of fully appreciating its real value and its great power, and are able to apply it accordingly. (*See* chapter on Mistress and Maid.)

There are, unfortunately, too many women in America whose fathers or husbands have made immense sums of money in disreputable varieties of commerce, and they naturally feel as if they had difficult positions to maintain; therefore they endeavor to veil unpleasant facts by a glamour of pomp and an imposing parade of indifference to the cost of their luxuries.

Extravagant outlays of money, of time, or of hospitalities really never delude even those who benefit by the golden shower—never. Their motive or their silliness is always perfectly comprehended, although the intpretation may never find itself spoken or written in words. The best of us do not eat the salt of another and then publicly quarrel with its savor—of course not; but the facts are too bald not to be fully understood for all that.

The superior hostess does not make her house a spectacle. She thoughtfully infuses into her hospitalities the charm of comfort and purity, the sweetness of friendship, the sacredness of the relation between the entertainer and the entertained ; and between herself and even the humblest of her guests there is a recognizable tie which is as dissimilar to that which fastens her interest to another guest as its variation is charming. As each individual is surrounded by a characterizing atmosphere, both social and mental, the successful hostess depends almost entirely upon discovering the peculiarities of each guest ; and, while she is blending them into an agreeable harmony, she is careful not to permit the distinguishing elements to be either lost or even forgotten in the general combination of individualities. The hostess should not be a leader but a promoter of attractive differences, which, like the various parts of music, make harmony by the union of their variations.

The silent person may be an artist in song, painting, or sculpture. The pleasant conversationist may possess no other accomplishment

than that of saying agreeable things in an attractive manner, and the pretty woman may have no other gift than the really great blessing of beauty. A happy hostess is she who entertains for the sake of giving rather than of expecting to receive pleasure. She has eyes and ears for every person in her house, and she is deaf and blind to every one at the same time. She is a discoverer of personal attractions in her less brilliant guests, and she manages to so deftly and delicately adjust these charms before the eyes of her other visitors that each supposes that he himself found them all out by intuition. So vain is the average mortal that he will be so profoundly pleased at his own cleverness of perception that he will forget to expect words of wisdom, or even jingles of pretty chatter, from lips that he has perceived are shaped in the exact arches of classic perfection, Wit that is not cruelty, and learning that is not assuming, arrogant, or aggressive, is always startled into sound by a sweet keynote that is furnished by the mistress of the house. She touches this note at a point and during a moment when her guest

is able to shine with the greatest brilliancy and glow with his finest effects.

A perfect entertainer never confides her worries or her sorrows to an abiding guest, much less will she mention them to one whose visit is to be brief or is only casual. It would be laying a burden upon another at a season when the sacredness of hospitality should protect him from every unpleasant thought.

The hostess, in sending invitations to her chosen guests, mentions the time when she will expect their arrival, and the length of the visit, and it must be a most unequivocally worded and cordially pressed invitation that can induce a guest to remain beyond the period fixed at the moment of the first acceptance of a proffered hospitality. There are not many occasions when it is agreeable to visitors to disarrange first plans and by a longer stay confuse their further projects, and it is as cordially friendly for the entertainer to speed the parting guest as it is to heartily welcome the coming one.

The hostess sends to the station for her visitors, and if she can she meets ladies in per-

son, but this courtesy is a part of friendship and not of etiquette. The luggage is attended to at the station by the servant, and after arriving at the house the visitor is detained by conversation a short time in the drawing or reception room, to give an opportunity for placing it in the chamber to which the guest is assigned. The hostess is not expected to show this room herself to the lady friend, but she sometimes goes with her guest as an especial mark of welcome, and the host does the same for the man visitor if it be convenient. Hosts inform their guests of the hours for meals, and leave them at liberty to adapt themselves to the customs of the house, which, of course, they will do if they are well bred. They find all needful comforts in waiting, including stationery, and, if circumstances permit, the lady will find flowers to welcome her.

When they depart, if it be by an early train, they take leave of their hosts the night before, insisting upon a quiet departure, should an offer be made to see them in the morning. In houses where much visiting is done, as is the custom

in some country residences, an early breakfast would be the constant fate of entertainers, hence the custom of making *adieu*s the previous night. Well-trained domestics arrange everything that makes departures easy, and the guest recognizes this attention both by thanks and also by any other method that individuals select. A small fee is given to the maid who has served a lady, and a gentleman remembers the man who has cared for his attire, and certainly a driver to an early train should be rewarded, but not after the English fashion. Indeed, most of our entertainers prefer that no "tips" at all should be given to their servants, on the plea that their wages are ample, and that the host prefers to meet all the expense of hospitality—and he is right. The custom of fees is mentioned here not because it is right, for such gifts of money really lower the dignity and self-respect of a domestic, but because this chapter relates what are the formulas of extended visits, and not wholly what they should be.

As was said before, the fine spirit of hospitality inspires one to bestow pleasure rather than

seek it. The hostess is supposed to be the giver, and not the receiver of delights ; and if she feel a deep gratification in entertaining her friends, it must always be through a reflected rather than a direct happiness.

XIX.

MISTRESS AND MAID.

NOTHING gives a more disagreeable impression to a visitor than an unpleasant or ill-mannered person at the entrance of a house, unless it be the creaking and grinding of an imperfect domestic machinery while one is a guest.

It is a misfortune in the selection of domestics, an ignorance in their management, a tyranny or a vulgar lack of dignity on the part of the mistress, or it is her natural incapacity to be that sort of queen in her own realm which first wins respect and then gracefully compels a willing orderliness and a satisfactory service, that causes untranquil homes. Which can it be? is the involuntary question that visitors ask of themselves. It may be only an unfamiliarity with the management of a corps of servants who have not themselves been properly instructed

and drilled to work easily and harmoniously together.

In America large households are seldom able to secure that efficient treasure—a trained housekeeper—and, strange to say, few mistresses like to have such a person stand between themselves and all the fret of care, even when their financial and social circumstances would make such a person not only desirable but a necessity in England or France. When good housekeepers are required, and possible to get, they assume all the management of the domestics, issue all the commands, and see that they are obeyed. They purchase and give out the stores of food and linen, keep the accounts, and take orders only from the master and mistress. This person has a chamber and sitting-room of her own. In the latter she takes her meals, which are prepared by the cook's assistant. In this room she receives her visitors. If there is a lady's maid, a nursery governess, or an upper nurse, these persons eat with her. Their dinner is served in the middle of the day, and their supper at six o'clock, whenever the family dine at seven or

later, and the other servants have supper immediately afterward.

The upper servants are on duty early in the evening. The mistress and daughters are to be dressed by the maid, and, perhaps, accompanied to parties. The nursery governess sits with the children and reads or talks to them before they go to sleep.

Most American ladies delegate only a part of the domestic care to their housekeepers, in which instance this upper domestic is usually called, and really is, a working housekeeper. Such assistants make the fine desserts, do the marketing, care for the linen, count and mend it, and also do the family mending, if there be no maid, and they report such matters to the mistress as the head of the house ought to know. If there is a maid, and she is a hair-dresser, dress-maker, milliner, lace mender, etc., the housekeeper in not over-large or excessively hospitable families has the entire care of all the personal linen that is not lace trimmed. She visits all the chambers every day, and sees that they are properly aired and cared for, and that matches, lamps, candles,

etc., are in order (if such be used), also that paper, ink, and *et cæteras* are supplied to the visitor, and that soap, towels, and the like, are fresh and abundant.

She also takes care of certain desserts and unfinished bottles of wine left from the dinner, and locks them away, provided there is no butler.

If there is a butler, he is held responsible for these things, and also for a proper serving of the breakfast, the luncheon, five o'clock tea, and the dinner. If there are one or more footmen, the butler trains and directs them, and sees that they are properly dressed and do their duties promptly and perfectly. He has care of the wines, and, if an old family servant, he is sometimes trusted with the key to the wine-cellar. This key is kept by the housekeeper or the mistress, though sometimes the master retains it, and orders out such bottles as he desires for a day or week, and then he receives the key again. Now and then he inspects and takes an inventory of his wines. The butler is responsible for the silver, the fine china, the cut glass, and all the rare jellies, fruits, nuts, confections, etc., that accompany desserts,

and have been given out to him in quantities. In some families he stands behind the chair of the mistress, and in some of the master. His placing is a matter for the family to decide, and not for the butler to choose. He may have one or more footmen to serve under him at dinner, but he is seldom assisted at other meals.

If the corps of servants is small, and there is no valet or groom of the chambers, he waits upon the master, caring for the condition of the library, the smoking and billiard room, arranges in their proper places the latest journals and magazines, with paper knife upon them. He waits upon the door, makes the salads, polishes the silver, dresses the table, rises early and looks after the boots, and attends to the open fires and lamps. Sometimes he also cleans the windows, but in large establishments windows, doorsteps and sidewalk, boots, lamps, fires, and silver polishing are attended to by the under footman, and the butler is responsible for a proper performance of this work. When the first footman serves at the door, assists at the table, cares for the drawing-room, carries messages, goes out

upon the box with the coachman when the ladies drive, or as groom in the saddle, the butler attends the door in his absence. In return this first footman assists in laying the table and cleaning the glass and china, when not otherwise occupied.

The lady's maid in America, if there is no housekeeper with a dining or sitting-room in which she may share, eats with the other servants, and if wise she makes herself generally agreeable, and, indeed, almost indispensable to the family. She should understand cutting and fitting all but the most ceremonious of dresses, also the making of them. She must be able to pack trunks with skill, dress hair and keep the scalp in a healthy condition, clean and mend laces, go out with the lady or her daughters, shop with taste and discretion, prepare a bath, look after costumes that have been taken off after a drive, a ride, a dinner, or a ball, and put them away, and also have in waiting suitable articles of toilette for each occasion as it arrives, and be always in prompt readiness for any change of plan.

When she does not accompany her mistress to a party, unless she has been given the evening, it is expected that she wait up for her, helping to undress her, and brush out and prepare her hair for the night.

If it is the lady's custom, she prepares for her a hot cup of tea or chocolate. Sometimes she is expected also to look after the cut flowers or the growing plants, or take out the pet dog for an airing or give it a bath, but all these matters are mentioned and settled when she is engaged, so that she may at once refuse such occupations, or hold her place and do her duties cheerfully and with alacrity. At the same time she is made acquainted with the style of dress she is expected to wear, and she must always be tidy in appearance, respectful and pleasant in manner, in which case she has a right to appreciation and a fair compensation according to her capacity or skill.

The nursery governess is usually a French or a German woman with a fair education, good manners, a controlled temper, and an unquestionable character. Her charge is over such

children as are not far on in learning. She teaches them to speak correctly in her own language, to conduct themselves in becoming, pleasant, and courteous ways toward each other and everybody else. She washes, dresses, and reads to them, walks and drives with them, instructs them in table manners, always eating with them, and generally she has the entire management of their outings.

The nursery maid performs all their chamber work, washes the clothing of the governess, unless other arrangements are made by the mistress, serves them at table if they eat in the nursery, and waits upon them promptly and cheerfully, according to the directions of the governess.

When the children are too old to require a nursery maid, the cook's assistant serves the meals in the nursery and waits upon this table, which should always be abundant, perfectly cooked, and nicely served, but not rich in quality or consisting of too great a variety of food at one meal.

The housekeeper usually wears a tiny cap or

half square of white mull or lace, a black cashmere or silk dress, and in the morning a black silk or alpaca apron, or, if she prefer it, a white apron of moderate size.

The nursery governess does not wear a cap, but she usually prefers a gray, brown, or a black costume, simply but neatly made, and an apron of any dainty fabric while she is in the nursery. When she goes out to drive or to walk with the children she is clothed as any gentlewoman may be who is not a devotee to society.

A dining-room and parlor maid, if there is or is not a butler, wears a light-colored cotton dress, neatly and simply made, a large cambric or linen apron, a muslin cap, and silent shoes. The head nurse, who has the entire care of infants night and day, wears soft dark wool or light-colored cotton dresses, large aprons, and ruffled caps with an Alsatian bow in front and long ends at the back.

The butler wears a dress suit and white tie at dinner time, and the footmen are dressed in a livery that has been adopted by the family. All the men are careful to wear noiseless house

shoes, are smoothly shaven, brush their hair in tidy fashion, and keep it cut rather short. They wear fresh white cotton gloves while serving at table.

Some families put their butlers in livery, and this house dress corresponds with that of the coachman in its hue, its buttons, etc. As a general thing, however, Americans do not ask this man to wear the family colors. Liveries are furnished by the employer.

The kitchen servants dress to suit their own tastes, but the mistresses of all well-ordered establishments insist upon neat, serviceable, and suitable attire throughout her house. This much all servants owe to their employers, and a considerate mistress will never present them with her own cast-off fineries. It demoralizes certain characters, and is an offense to the self-respect of others.

The table provided for the domestics is always good, plentiful, and properly served. Generally it is cooked by the assistant or kitchen maid, the *chef* not being expected to prepare such simple food unless he chooses to do so.

Of course in a republic, where every individual householder has a perfect right to arrange his affairs to please himself, there is and will be, for at least a long time to come, a somewhat unsettled code for domestic service, but the earlier there is a general uniformity of established regulations for mistress and maid the happier will it be for both.

Such of our citizens as have sufficient ambition to live after a fashion that is befitting large incomes are glad to learn the most satisfactory methods of enjoying hospitality and social life at home, but the rich are, and always will be, in a small minority when compared with the numbers of families who possess but moderate incomes, and these be they to whom, or for whom, the remainder of this chapter is especially and respectfully devoted.

Good form in every family is always practiced by each member of it, and is always exacted of those who enter upon its service. It brings comfort and tranquillity into the home, and it makes these blessings abiding ones. Domestic are frequently mentioned as "dependents," but

the mistress, and indeed each member of the household, is as much a dependent, in the strictest meaning of the word, as are those other ones who enter the house for wages and remain at the service and in the interest of those who pay them.

When a money compensation is given to the servant, too many mistresses convince themselves that they have fulfilled all their part of the compact, but they have not by any means, as they would soon discover could they be transplanted into the heart of some good Old World family, where the mistress is the maid's protector, and the man and maid are faithful servants, also loyal and respectful friends. This relation it is which wins those zealous services which the American reads about, talks about, and longs for with an eager envy. And this happy fortune which fails to reach their own households sometimes raises in them a resentment which they unintentionally and indirectly inflict upon their own inferior domestics. It is possible, even probable, that in America it is to our hitherto unsettled relation between mistress and maid

that we owe much of our discomfort. In England, France, and Germany the members of one class of citizens have and hold their own distinct social positions with as much dignity and self-respect as the other grade whom they serve, and each class performs the duty belonging to its order with as careful exactitude and as clear and conscientious a sense of moral and social obligation as the other. There is a difference in these separate duties, but not in the spirit or skill of their execution.

New York, more clearly than lesser cities, has already learned this lesson of mutual relationship and independence. Indeed, some of its oldest and most influential social leaders wisely sought intelligence upon these vital subjects from such foreign households as have enjoyed centuries of established tranquillity and comfort, and the result of their acquired knowledge is already felt, and is spreading. These families have applied such imported formulas for the mutual relationships of employer and employed as it was deemed possible and wise to transplant to a republic.

This city has already made a far better and more satisfactory condition for ambitious domestics, and there is also a more friendly and sympathetic attitude of mind felt and expressed toward them by their employers, than was known to either of them a few years ago.

The relations established between mistress and maid, in both elaborate and simple establishments, are becoming better and better since mutual obligations are understood and cordially approved. Those regulations for service which are needful and satisfactory in other countries have necessarily been modified to suit our freer and better educated working people, but such unwritten laws as have been arranged for the guidance of employer and employed are as inflexible as it is wise or kind to maintain them at this grade of our civilization. None feels the fret or friction of wise laws or regulations either public or private. On the contrary, the family code is as much a protection against injustice as those laws that have been enacted by the State.

In none of the conditions or happenings of life is considerateness and courtesy or discour-

tesy, appreciation or indifference, of more value and importance than that which superior persons are able to bestow or to inflict upon those who serve them.

If domestics are ignorant of their duties, and the mistress is inclined to retain the uninstructed, she is quite as much under obligation to teach them kindly, patiently, and thoroughly, as she is to compensate them with money.

This duty is demanded of her by a rigid social etiquette. Its performance is exacted by society at large, because it is realized that the domestic which is hers to-day may be in the service of her neighbor, and perhaps of her friend, to-morrow, consequently she is passing on to others a capacity for skilled work and perfect domestic manners that were bred in her home and under her personal influence.

Even without a strong sense of the continuity of excellence in service, all good and thoughtful women are ruled, either consciously or unconsciously, by that brief but potent sentence, "*noblesse oblige.*"

Friendliness toward those who are under our

roofs, but who are not of our blood or grade, is easily made consistent by a simplicity, directness, and dignity of speech and manners. Genuine kindness is boundless in its influences over untutored minds, and it is sure to express itself by a faithful love that binds the heart firmly and lastingly to the person and to the interests of such mistresses as are generous enough or sympathetic enough, or even wise enough, to practice it.

The mistress should clearly understand exactly what service she has a right to expect of each one of her domestics, and these duties she should explain clearly and in detail to them when she proposes to employ them, and also the hours during which she shall demand their fulfillment.

When she parts from them she owes it to each of them, to herself, and also to their future employers, to be candid and strictly ingenuous in the characters which she gives to them, even though she be strongly tempted by compassion and generosity to conceal their faults, or by vexation to withhold their virtues. By being

assured that such justice and truthfulness are inevitable, and that no gentlewoman will stoop to evade facts, a higher standard of excellence will be striven after by all worthy domestics, and the mistress will all the more readily assist and instruct them how to attain skill, promptness, good manners, self - respect, and, as a consequence, they will become more valuable to themselves and also to their employers.

XX.

ADDRESSES AND SIGNATURES.

AFTER a lady is married, it is a near and dear relationship or friendship that justifies the use of the name by which she was christened, when speaking, writing, or mentioning her. Familiarity that is unwarranted is either a discourtesy or a vulgarity, and not infrequently it is both.

A lady who has not been married, and is no longer young, should be addressed and mentioned by every one, except her household, with the prefix of Miss before her name, even though the number of daughters in her family make it necessary, for the sake of definiteness, to include her baptismal name also when mentioning her. To use a first name when conversing with an elderly unmarried woman is in bad form. Had the fine old custom been retained of addressing matrons and all unwedded women who were no longer youthful as Mistress —, speech with

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them would be far more elegant than it is—Mrs., as a word, meaning nothing. In notes and speech a young unmarried lady is addressed as Miss —— by gentlemen, mere acquaintances, and servants, but her own family and kinsfolk, also her intimate friends, call her by the name which was given to her at baptism, and it is not considered in good form to speak to or of her otherwise. The use of Miss by her own circle leaves no distinctive method by which remoter persons may speak to or of a young girl.

This formality may be criticised by captious and inelegant people, but the fact that it is according to the usages of the very best society, gives a law for it that is permanent, and has an excellent underlying reason for its establishment.

It is an impertinence for a man who is not a kinsman, or a *fiancé*, to write to, speak to, or speak of, a lady by her baptismal name, even though a friendship of long standing exists between them. For a dear woman friend to speak to, or, indeed, of her by any but her first name, except to a social inferior, would be inelegant, for reasons before given.

When writing to a married woman, the envelope is always addressed to her husband's name, with the invariable and clear prefix of "Mrs.," except it be a business note which concerns her separate material and personal affairs.

A mere acquaintance or stranger will again address her upon the page of the letter in the same manner, prefacing it with "Dear Madam." If it be a social note written to one who is but slightly acquainted with the author, it may be prefixed by "Dear Mrs. Blank." If a more cordial relation exists, it may be "My dear Mrs. Blank," but friends may address each other as they please. For the near and dear there is no law.

An acquaintance may sign himself or herself "Truly your friend," even though it would be altogether too familiar to address a woman as such.

The stranger's note, also that of the business writer, may close with "Yours truly," "Yours respectfully," or "obediently," according to circumstances. It may be "Gratefully yours," "Regretfully yours," etc., according to conditions.

A letter should be signed by the writer's full name, or at least by two names, and if there are more than that belonging to the correspondent, it is a matter of habit whether they be written out or their initials be used to signify them. Good taste refuses to omit them.

It is claimed by some persons, who are always demanding something or other, that if a man has a right to sign his initials only as a prefix to his last name, a woman should be given the same privilege ; and so she ought, if it be an advantage or a blessing, which, by the way, it is not, or, if it be, it is seldom used by men of cultivation. If haste is the reason for writing initials, too little time is gained by shortening one's signature to make justifiable a vagueness in one's address. Sometimes one's sponsors have bestowed so unpleasant a name that it is almost always a suspected infliction whenever the cognomen is not written out in full at the close of a stranger's letter. The value of time and the cost of effort seldom enter one's mind when studying an abbreviated signature, though doubtless it would be charitable and generous to do

so, instead of suspecting the writer of curtness.

Brevity is not infrequently held to be a discourtesy where it plainly indicates an unwillingness to expend time or effort upon a correspondent. A married lady, if she respects the *convenances*, never prefixes "Mrs." to her signature, except she is writing to a stranger who can not know her relationship, in which case she encloses it in brackets, thus: [Mrs.]. Sometimes, when there is a needful formality in the letter, or it is important that no mistake be made about its authorship, she may sign her own name in full, and beneath it, in brackets, her husband's, just as she would order it engraved upon her visiting-card.

If she is a widow, at any time within three years she may continue the use of this explanatory signature, after which, if her late husband's name need be mentioned at all, she writes it in parenthesis, thus :

(Widow of the late Mr. A. A. Blank.)

The unmarried lady encloses [Miss] before

her signature, when it is essential that her identity be perfectly understood.

A married lady may sign herself Mrs. Blank, and an unmarried one Miss Blank, or Miss Polly Blank, when writing to butcher, baker, or any other domestic order, and the date and address upon it will prove a sufficient direction for its response.

An attention to these little, but by no means insignificant, details by such persons as have missed an early instruction in regard to them, will prove to be of greater value to them than they may suspect. A familiarity with the etiquette of correspondence may not establish as a fact that the one who conducts his affairs according to the habits of good society was really born to such refinements of manner and to such delicate usages, neither does it disprove a good birth if he practices them, though an absence of attention to these little marks of familiarity with the habits of cultivated people is sure to place him unpleasantly in the esteem of those to whom he addresses letters.

Letter paper should be fine and plain, and

for ordinary notes neither crest nor cipher should be upon it, though the latter ornaments may be used for such letters as are ceremonious, or are of such a friendly nature that they are likely to be preserved.

Postal cards are only for business of an unimportant character, and ladies seldom use them at all, except as messengers sent to a shopkeeper with an order.

All notes receive an immediate reply, but letters are answered according to sentiment and occasion, if between friend and friend. A stranger's letter, also that of a casual acquaintance, receives an early answer from considerate persons. There was a time when, if a stranger wrote a letter that required an answer, he enclosed the postage to prepay its delivery, but in these days of inexpensive mail service such an enclosure would be an offense, except between business men.

Letters of friendship and courtesy, also ceremonious notes of all varieties, are sealed by wax, the color of which suits the taste. When the writer is in mourning, black wax rather than

black-bordered paper is in good taste. The seal may be a crest, a cipher, an initial, a motto, or a favorite ring. This return to us of a fine old custom offers a wide range for the uses of significant objects and sentiments.

XXI.

ETIQUETTE FOR CHILDREN.

"WHOM the gods destroy they first make mad," said a wise and truthful old heathen. More than likely he had fond and foolish parents in his mind when he uttered this pathetic bit of truth, because destruction of whatever makes life a satisfaction is almost sure to fall from the hands of spoiled children. The fretful, unhappy, and intolerable small person is the one who is thrust forward into the notice of visitors, some of whom flatter it by praising its beauty, its wittings, and immaturities, while others, being bored or disgusted, treat the young being unpleasantly, simply because they are unable to otherwise punish the parent, to whom all the disapproval properly belongs, and of whom guests are sure to be thinking whenever they rebuff the infant.

Such children are uncertain of their posi-

tions in the world of grown folk, but they know quite enough to be dissatisfied with the instability of their honors, and they usually express their emotions upon this subject by most emphatic and disagreeable methods. Sometimes it is a wailing insistence upon attention, and not infrequently it demands its supposed rights by more active measures.

Those little men and women who were born of wise mothers have a domain of their own, and there they are more themselves. Their rights are respected, their wrongs adjusted, and they receive respectful attention upon their own levels and according to their own grades. Such children having been taught that they have not yet attained any recognized rights in society, are likely to prefer their nurseries, or at least that world to which they properly belong, and for the most part such children are happy and attractive.

On seeing a crusty bachelor enjoy a romp with a small toddler whom he found in the garden, a surprised friend said to him : " But you dislike children, don't you know ? " " On the

contrary, I like them very much, but for the most part, oh, how I do loathe mothers ! It is they who make the child disagreeable. Nature doesn't do it." He was right, and society has found out the same thing, and none too soon ; consequently the average small child has become healthier and happier than it once was, in this great metropolis. It now has its clearly defined rights, its wholesome and regular meals, its proper clothing, and its simple amusements, and also its fixed holidays.

As a rule in New York, the lass and lad who are yet students have their breakfast at an earlier hour than their parents do, and the governess presides at the table, taking her own first meal with them, or, if she chooses, with the still younger people in the nursery. If the smallest one of the family is old enough to feed itself properly, it is likely to take its breakfast with its brothers and sisters. The table manners of the group are under the care of the presiding lady, and she has full authority to advise and correct, and in families of fine breeding and cultivation her directions are not only sustained but admired and

approved. Having been placed over the children because of her superior qualities, she stands to them instead of parents whenever the latter are absent. Indeed, she maintains her watchful attitude over them, and issues all needful rebukes to them, even in the mother's presence, if the law is placed wholly in her hands, as it not unfrequently is, and ought to be, when she is worthy to command.

After breakfast the governess sometimes walks to school with the elder girls, leaving the nursery pupils at their books under the care of the head nurse, or, perhaps, if the weather be fine, they all go out for a walk at the same time. Sometimes a maid accompanies the girls and smaller boys to their respective schools—regulations for these matters being made variable by the mistress of the house, no fixed rule being possible where the size and circumstances of families differ. A division of the responsibility and labor is justly made, and then its accomplishment is exacted, with gentleness, but inflexible firmness.

After breakfast the father usually asks to see

the small children, and their coming in to say good-morning and good-by is a delight when children are carefully reared. After this ceremony the mother spends an hour or more in the nursery, talking or playing with the wee folk, after which she is seldom able to see them again until it is her luncheon time, which is also their dinner hour.

At this meal, if the mother is at home, and there are no formal guests, the family, large and small, have an hour of perfect social equality. The children are upon their good, or what they call their "grown-up behavior." The serving of this meal is as orderly and as ceremonious as if persons of honor were present. Here it is that the fine manners of gentlemen and gentlewomen are learned. An intimate and trusted friend of the family, whose conversation will not lower the tone of the child's ideals, or the mother's standards, is now and then admitted to this mid-day meal. Even with the equality of the occasion children do not presume to be men and women. The hour is usually half-past one o'clock, and the older students are at home for

an enjoyment of their mother's society. In the afternoon there is walking, driving, dancing, or other extra lessons, and supper is served at six o'clock in the nursery for all the children until they are thirteen or fourteen years old, when, if there are no guests, they dine with their parents. On Sundays their father is also present at the mid-day meal, and there is a general endeavor to make him feel that he is an honored guest at their dinner. Here it is that the observant man takes mental notes of habits, language, tone of thought, ambitions, and tendencies of his children, and at his leisure and in confidence he holds wise and charming *tête-à-têtes* with each one of them. These solitary conversations make lasting impressions upon young minds, if the spirit of them is gentle, tender, and generous. A child will remember a word spoken in secret that will pass by him unheeded if it is mentioned in the presence of others. Faults may be corrected very easily if taken in this manner. The rebuke is a sacred secrecy. A public correction, except it be for a flagrant act of discourtesy, should never be inflicted

upon a child, and it never is, in wisely conducted households.

In some families the older children come into the dining-room only when dessert is served, if there are no formal guests, but they retire to their studies in an hour, and are in bed by nine o'clock. The younger ones say good-night to each other by half-past six or seven. Except on birthdays, and at weddings, the children never appear when there are invited guests in the drawing-room. On these family festivals, if properly bred, their manners will be unobtrusive and gentle. If a little tempestuous, or over-hilarious, and a word of disapproval is insufficiently subduing, the little rebel is sent off to the nursery without further remonstrance. One such lesson is quite enough for an entire childhood for most children. This treatment may seem severe, but it is a fact that one punishment of this kind is far less intolerable and injurious to a child's temper than that constant nagging and rebuking in the presence of visitors, which was too frequently endured by both guests and children before etiquette forbade it, refusing any

longer to tolerate this public offense to good taste and decent manners. Those who have not the wisdom to accept a disapproval of nagging and scolding small people before guests, because it is coarse and unwise, will be sure to change their family usages in this matter as soon as they know that in polite society it is pronounced "bad, very bad form." This high circle holds it to be the unformed manners of the mother, and not the misconduct of the child, from which it is made to suffer. It is also counted as much under-bred to discuss the affairs of the nursery as it is to recount the difficulties of managing servants, both topics having been banished from the drawing-room.

So seldom are children now present in that part of the house devoted to visitors, that happily there are fewer temptations for a mother who is inclined to break this social law, which has lately become rigid.

Of course, the mother spends all her spare hours with her little brood, in between her many cares and her obligations to society, and it will often be found that the woman who says least

about her little ones to her mere acquaintances is the one who is most devoted to the maintenance of their healths, their intellectual growths, and also to their conduct or breeding. To sum this chapter up, its kernel is this : Children and their faults and ailments, their wit and their precocities, are considered scarcely more suitable as topics for conversation than servants and their incapacities.

XXII.

NEW-YEAR AND CHRISTMAS IN NEW YORK.

FOR those who are able to escape from the city to country houses, there are no winter holidays in town. The old custom of a generous and general hospitality has become too burdensome, and, indeed, impossible, with the vast size of the city. It was from no want of sympathy with the fine open-heartedness of its first settlers that our doors in New York have been closed on New Year's day. To leave them open was to find not even standing room in popular households, and so New-Year has become an out-of-town, or a family day.

Smaller cities may still hold to the old, beautiful custom of universal hospitality, but it no longer has a fixed place in New York etiquette.

Many persons who have country houses leave them in the autumn and reopen them just for holiday week. They fill them with

guests, and brilliant scenes of dancing, feasting, theatricals, and musicales are arranged for mutual delight.

Sometimes a hostess who can not conveniently open her own home, and wishes to give pleasure to her young friends, secures a large suite of rooms at a hotel in the country, and orders *menus* for meals for a certain set of guests. There is at least one other matron in the party besides the hostess, and the invitation is for a fixed number of days, the times for arriving and departing being arranged by the entertainer. Sometimes a car for the journey is assigned to guests. This visit demands all those courtesies toward host and hostess, and as exact conformities to their plans, as if the hotel were a gentleman's country villa. The office of chaperon, of course, is made as easy as possible to her by all young people who respect the *convenances* or themselves.

In New York the clergyman and the highest officials generally hold receptions from eleven to three o'clock, so that their male friends may pay their respects to them.

The invalid is remembered on the first day of the year by a call in person and by kindly inquiries.

At Christmas in town the poor who have business or other affiliations with the family, and also those who have none, are remembered by good wishes, accompanied by good cheer of some acceptable sort. Cards are sent to acquaintances, and gifts pass between friends.

One of the most refined and gratifying of simple courtesies is to have a short sentiment printed in silver or gold across the top of a visiting-card, and send it to one's friends. This added line or two may be the family motto, or a selected quotation. The visiting-card with Mr. and Mrs. engraved upon it is in good form for married persons to use on this occasion, because it makes a whimsical number of cards quite needless, and besides, this union of sentiment is more gratifying. Instead of Christmas cards of a fanciful and sometimes an expensive quality, little books, of a seasonable order, are sent to intimate friends.

Lavish presents upon this sacred anniversary are not considered in delicate taste.

Personal notes of good will and continued friendship are held to be the most refined and valuable of all the seasonable interchanges of courtesy and remembrance. These are sent by messenger if preferred, although etiquette permits the services of the postman. Care, however, should be taken that messages consigned to the care of the latter should have ample time to find their destinations by Christmas eve, or at latest by Christmas day, always remembering that the mails are overladen at this season, and more than usual time is likely to be required by the postal service.

XXIII.

FUNERAL CUSTOMS.

A FEW years ago and a portion of this chapter could not have been written. The etiquette which carried formal people through the old ordeals of bereavement by death was invariably the same among all classes of society from one end of our land to the other. The very monotony of expression which grief felt compelled to assume, in order to be respectable, was one of its least endurable qualities. We all knew that, whenever one of our kinspeople departed from us, there were just such and such processes of systematic attentions to be performed over his remains, and just such quality and quantity of solemnity was to be thrown about the conduct of our lives for a certain length of time. It was all settled by custom.

We knew that whatever agony we suffered, much of our distress must be endured in the

presence of auditors, and that all the offices of kindness which it was possible to bestow upon the beloved dead must be performed by the hands of neighbors or hirelings. Among such liberties as are enumerated with thankful pride, the freedom of mourning for our dead, and of caring for their inanimate forms according to the suggestions of our affection, could not be counted.

A transformation in funeral services came about, but just how it happened nobody knows. There is at present really no strict etiquette for the conduct of burials in New York. Of course the religious services performed over the dead are more or less under the influence of the Church to which the officiating clergyman belongs, but the usages of burial are no longer guided and controlled by any fixed set of regulations.

The arranging and composing of the person of the departed has ceased to be a stereotyped crossing of the palms upon the breast and a rigid upturning of the face. Natural and easy positions of the hands, with the features in partial

profile, have become customary and more agreeable. The clothing is almost always the same as that worn in life. For the young, festal costumes are often selected ; and happily the appalling shroud and winding-sheet belong to the dreary legends of the past.

It is not uncommon for the soulless body to be neatly attired, as if it were a semi-invalid who had fallen asleep upon a sofa. It is tenderly pillowed and luxuriously draped. Friends take their last look upon the quiet face, and there is at least one throb of pain the less because of the absence of a coffin.

The apartment is often made to wear a cheery aspect by the presence of bright and sweet flowers, which are chosen and arranged with a taste from which ostentatious lavishness is excluded. Pallid blossoms are not chosen by all who have been bereaved. Religious services are frequently performed while the deceased is still lying uncoffined, and the burial takes place at any subsequent time which is convenient to the survivors. This satisfactory arrangement has led to less public interments, because under

such circumstances none but immediate kinspeople follow the hearse to the cemetery.

It is not uncommon for only the male relations of the deceased to be present at the interment, but etiquette fixes no rule for these things. Individual inclination determines the form of such sad offices.

So lavish have been the offerings of flowers that were wrought into unnatural forms, and dedicated by their letterings to absurd uses, that many families beg, through a public card which accompanies the funeral notice, that no friends will contribute flowers. Not that they are banished utterly, but they are delicately selected, and a sentiment of reserve rather than ostentation is expressed by their selection and arrangement.

Sometimes a tiny sheaf of ripened wheat is laid with a palm branch upon the coffin, or by the side of the venerable dead. A wreath of bay-leaves is chosen for the one whose loss is a public calamity ; white lilies and willow branches, or a garland of poppies, for the long-suffering, are satisfying ; but pillows of wire-fettered carna-

tions and harps of rosebuds are becoming less and less attractive to individuals of refined taste. These costly and ungraceful contributions, with the cards of their donors attached, for newsgatherers to copy and to publish, are not among the refined accessories of a funeral among our superior people.

A bunch of fragrant blossoms upon the bosom of the dead, flowers selected with an appropriateness to the circumstances, age, or sentiments of the soulless sleeper, are always an agreeable and suggestive attention ; but flowers tied into forms, or in any excess, are no longer considered refined or desirable.

The old custom of sitting by the dead, during the long solemn nights that come in between death and burial, has also passed away, except where the remains require attention. It is a sleep that needs no guarding under ordinary circumstances.

For the funeral of either a woman or man, sometimes six or eight friends are chosen from the immediate circle of the deceased, to act as "bearers of the pall," provided the burial fol-

lows the funeral. This formality becomes an unnecessary usage when the burial is not immediate. These bearers are furnished with black kid gloves to wear at the funeral of a man or an elderly woman, but white ones are usually worn when a young woman has departed. A scarf of black crape or of fine white linen, according to the occasion, is tied about the left arm or laid about the shoulders. These gentlemen sometimes carry the dead to and from the hearse, but oftener they only serve as a guard, and stand with lifted hats during the removal of the coffin by persons who have been detailed for this duty.

The family and intimate friends do not take leave of their beloved in the presence of the public, when a funeral service is held either at the house or in church. This suffering is endured in private before the arrival of those who are only acquaintances. The family is not visible during the formal religious rites, but they are not beyond the hearing of the words of the clergyman.

Sometimes a chosen friend, and sometimes a sexton, arranges the mournful programme that

begins a funeral and terminates at the grave, thus sparing the wearied from unnecessary anxiety.

If cremation becomes a general method for sparing our beloved dead from prolonged processes of decomposition, the formality of funeral rites will, of necessity, be very much modified.

A widow wears the plainest of crape and bombazine or other woolen costume, with a little cap border of white *lisse*, or tarletan. During three months her long veil of crape or a wool tissue is worn to conceal her face. Afterward, she may wear a short black tulle veil, with her crape drapery thrown backward. This extreme expression of respect, or of mourning, must be worn a full year, and as much longer as the widow chooses.

In France, the customary evidences of grief are fixed and permanent, as were our own funeral rites until very lately. This invariableness of costume during times of bereavement contrasts sharply, and almost absurdly, with the usual Parisian caprices of dress. In New York widows seldom dress in gay colors, and not a

few of them wear only black dresses as long as they live, or until they are again wedded. This constant costume is of silk, cashmere, etc., and lightened by laces, white tulle ruchings, and other softening bits of gauzy prettiness.

For a father, mother, and for children, the deepest expression of sorrow that garments can produce is worn for one year at least; and afterward circumstances and individual convictions determine how soon black shall be lightened in quality until it ceases to be a mourning attire. For brothers and sisters, there are six months of crape and bombazine, six of cashmere, unlustered silks, and grenadines of plain texture; and afterward black, white, and gray are considered appropriate tints of dress for another half year. The wearing for three months of colorless garments is customary after the decease of grandparents, aunts, and uncles, but crapes are not usually selected after the loss of these remoter kinspeople.

Children wear mourning garments a year when they have lost a father, mother, brother, or sister; but white and black are so combined

in their costumes that the little ones are not too deeply saddened by their attire.

Gentlemen's hats carry a depth of weed that is cut according to the nearness of the relative for whose loss it is worn, and, except in case of a widower, men continue to dress in mourning garments as long as it is the habit of their households, leaving the period of its use to be regulated entirely by the women. A widower should wear deep mourning, which includes gloves, necktie, and weed, with a costume of black or of very dark gray, for at least one year. Scrupulous and formal gentlemen wear black-bordered linen, and jet shirt-studs and buttons, but these persons are not numerous in New York.

Satisfactory as it would be to announce that limitations or fixed periods, for the wearing of somber robes after the loss of our kinspeople, had been decided upon by our social leaders, we have not yet reached that point. The quality of the fabrics which express the utmost sorrow has been the same for many a year, and it is recognized by everybody; but just how long it is to be worn is undetermined by our authori-

ties in these matters. It is an unquestioned custom for all who attend a funeral to attire themselves in black garments if possible, and certainly not in gay ones, as a mark of respect to the afflicted family.

The length of time to be devoted to seclusion from society after a funeral is another unfixed limit. Indeed, in regard to funerals and their subsequent and consequent appointments, there is no rigid etiquette, and this chapter is written to explain the freedom rather than the formality of these things. Many people entertain conscientious scruples which prevent the adoption of a mourning garb under any circumstances, and their convictions are respected. They insist that no set of sentiments can be expressed by material things. Hence our chaotic freedom in these matters.

Neither visiting nor a general receiving of formal visits, within a year after the loss of a near relative, is considered in good taste, and usually two years are devoted to a more or less severe seclusion from general society. This retirement does not lessen the considerate attentions of friends. Cards are sent to express sym-

pathy when a death occurs, but only an intimate friendship affords one permission to write a note of condolence. Long, torturing letters of sympathy are fortunately among our obsolete customs.

Printed or engraved notes, or large cards, heavily bordered with black, sometimes, but very rarely, announce to both friends and acquaintances the decease of a member of the family. They usually furnish the place and date of birth, the residence, and date of decease.

It is proper to call at the door in person and make kindly inquiries for the household, also to leave visiting-cards with the left side or left lower corner folded over, as soon as a death in one's circle is published; but it is not etiquette to ask to see the afflicted unless there exists a genuine intimacy between the visitor and the bereaved.

THE END.

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